United Nations S/2016/165

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 19 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 February 2016 from the representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Raimonda **Murmokaitė**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 19 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is with great alarm that I draw your attention to the deliberate escalation of indiscriminate air strikes by Russian forces throughout the civilian occupied areas of northern Syria, in direct violation of Security Council resolutions 2258 (2015), 2254 (2015), 2209 (2015), 2165 (2014) and 2139 (2014) and in clear contravention of international law.

On Monday, 15 February 2016, Russian air forces, acting in collaboration with Assad regime forces, launched a series of targeted bombings on medical and educational facilities in northern Syria that left at least 45 civilians dead and dozens of others wounded. In total, six hospitals and one medical facility, serving some 23,000 patients per month, were targeted. In Maarat al-Numan, in Idlib governorate, two hospitals were bombed, one of which was supported by Médecins Sans Frontières and was the repeated subject of missile attacks. In A'zaz, a mother and child hospital supported by the United Nations was also bombed, as was the general hospital. Also in A'zaz, Russian forces bombed a school that sheltered internally displaced persons, killing 14 civilians.

Russia's attacks on Syria's hospitals and schools were intentional and premeditated. All of the hospitals' locations were well known and well documented, and their civilian character was abundantly clear to the Russian authorities. The decision to target Syria's medical infrastructure — in spite of or, more accurately, because of the vital services they provide — represents a deliberate strategy on Russia's part to destroy civilian life in opposition-held areas and to render these areas uninhabitable. The attacks almost certainly constitute grave war crimes.

Russia's attacks on Syria's hospitals are just the latest and most heinous example of Russia's unwanted meddling in and occupation of Syria and its calculated campaign of war crimes. Russia's attacks on Syria's hospitals represent a war crime, punishable under international humanitarian law. Hospitals, medical units and health-care personnel must all receive special protection under international humanitarian law. Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 demands that Syria's wounded and sick be collected and cared for, yet, by directing attacks against hospitals caring for the sick and wounded, Russia has flagrantly violated this law.

On behalf of the Syrian people, I therefore call upon individual Member States and the United Nations:

(a) To launch an investigation into the attacks of 15 February on medical facilities and schools in northern Syria and ensure that the investigation attributes responsibility;

(b) To demand the immediate exit of all foreign parties to the conflict in Syria, including the Russian Federation, Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and condemn the actions of Russian forces in the strongest terms;

(c) To protect civilians from future indiscriminate strikes by Russia and Syrian regime forces, including by enforcing a no-bombing zone across Syria, with the aim of deterring indiscriminate air strikes against civilians;

(d) To ensure accountability for all war crimes committed by referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, launching a case under universal jurisdiction or taking measures to establish an independent international criminal tribunal for Syria.

The attacks of 15 February were not an outlier for Russian forces in Syria; they were, in fact, business as usual. In the four months that its air forces have been bombing throughout Syria, Russia has been responsible for more than 1,500 civilian deaths. Russian forces have mercilessly attacked schools, hospitals and water treatment facilities. They have killed women and children. While claiming to seek out terrorists, the vast majority of Russian targets — over 95 per cent, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights — have been civilians. Such intervention is unwanted, illegitimate and illegal. It is patently outrageous to be striking bilateral deals with Russia, as was the case in Munich, on the "cessation of hostilities" when those deals do not include a cessation by one of the leading killers of civilians in Syria: the Russian Federation. It is high time that Russia left Syria and ended its brutal war on our civilians.

(*Signed*) Khaled **Khoja**
President
National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces

United Nations A/70/752–S/2016/166

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
26 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 120
Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 18 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In accordance with Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations and the joint letter of the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council dated 15 December 2015, I have the honour to present the candidature of Ambassador Natalia Gherman, who held the position of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I include herewith a letter from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Pavel Filip, initiating the nomination, as well as the curriculum vitae of Ms. Gherman (see annex).

(*Signed*) Vlad **Lupan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-03117 (E) 030316

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Annex to the letter dated 18 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Letter dated 18 February 2016 from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has the honour to nominate Ambassador Natalia Gherman for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. Ms. Gherman is a prominent diplomat whose leadership and merits are recognized and appreciated in her own country and internationally. Her curriculum vitae is attached hereto (see enclosure).

Ambassador Gherman held various top positions in the Government of the Republic of Moldova, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Acting Prime Minister and Member of Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. She represented her country with dignity as Ambassador to the United Nations agencies in Vienna, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Finland.

The recognition of the authority of Ms. Gherman was best displayed in her leadership of the United Nations global dialogue on strengthening capacities and building effective institutions for the implementation of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and the subsequent adoption of the Chisinau Outcome Statement, which proved to be a valuable contribution to the new global development road map for the next 15 years. Coordinating the national efforts to deliver on the post-2015 development agenda, Ms. Gherman focused on strengthening the human rights mechanisms, women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as the promotion of Moldova-United Nations cooperation in the field of energy. Moreover, Ms. Gherman was an efficient partner for the United Nations in Moldova and in the region in the successful piloting of one of the aspects of United Nations reform — the concept of "One United Nations".

The affirmative legacy of her prolific activity for the Republic of Moldova is reflected in her country's concluding the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the European Union, for which Ambassador Gherman was the Chief Negotiator. She successfully led the European Union-Moldova visa dialogue that resulted in the liberalization of the visa regime for Moldovan citizens travelling to the European Union. These remarkable achievements placed Moldova on the path of reforms to further develop the standards of democracy, security, the rule of law and economic modernization.

Ms. Gherman is an expert and leader in regional and global security affairs, holding a master's degree in War Studies from King's College, University of London. She is a vocal and active promoter of peace through dialogue, justice, sustainable development and deep respect for the rule of law.

It is worth mentioning that in 2014 Ms. Gherman was selected by *The Guardian UK* to rank among the most impressive "Seven women to watch in global politics who are leading change all over the world".

In the spirit of equitable geographical representation at the United Nations, and taking into account the fact that since the foundation of the United Nations no candidate from the Eastern European region has had the honour to hold the post of Secretary-General, the Government of the Republic of Moldova believes that the next Head of the Organization should be selected among qualified candidates from this region.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Moldova strongly supports the principle of gender equality in the selection of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are most confident that with her outstanding leadership and negotiation skills, her professional and personal qualities of high moral integrity and her dedication to furthering the goals of humanity as enriched in the Charter, Ambassador Gherman is an excellent candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova would much appreciate if the Member States and the Security Council could be informed of this nomination in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/241 of 31 July 1997 and 69/321 of 11 September 2015, with the kind request to circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pavel **Filip**
Prime Minister

Enclosure

Curriculum vitae*

Natalia Gherman

Natalia Gherman has served for the past three years as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova. In June and July 2015 she was Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova. Ms. Gherman is a career diplomat holding the diplomatic rank of Ambassador. Her leadership qualities and excellent negotiation skills are highly appreciated in her own country and internationally.

Ms. Gherman received her BA from the State University of the Republic of Moldova and her MA in War Studies from King's College, University of London.

Ms. Gherman began her long career in service of her country in 1991 as the Second and then First Secretary for the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova. From 1994 to 1997, she served as Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Agencies in Vienna and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). From 1997 to 2001, Ms. Gherman became the Deputy Head of the Department of European Security and Political-Military Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She served as Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in Brussels, as well as Deputy Head of the Mission of Moldova to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2001 and 2002.

This led to ambassadorships, first as Ambassador to the Republic of Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Agencies in Vienna and to OSCE. Representing her country with dignity to OSCE in Vienna, Ms. Gherman has been a prominent contributor to the efforts of the Organization in identifying solutions to the unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area, at the same time mobilizing the potential of the OSCE community towards the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova in accordance with the provisions of international law. She is an expert and leader in regional and global security affairs, promoting peace through dialogue, justice, sustainable development and deep respect for the rule of law.

From 2006 to 2009, Ambassador Gherman established the diplomatic presence of her country in the Nordic region, having served as first resident Moldovan Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Finland. For her merits in promoting relations between Sweden and Moldova, the King of Sweden awarded Ms. Gherman the Royal Order of the Polar Star of the Kingdom of Sweden in the rank of Commander First Class.

As Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration from 2009 to 2013, Ms. Gherman was the Chief Negotiator on behalf of the Republic of Moldova for the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the European Union. Ambassador Gherman also successfully led the European Union-Moldova visa dialogue that resulted in the liberalization of the visa regime for Moldovan citizens travelling to the European Union. These remarkable

* Curriculum vitae are issued without formal editing.

achievements placed Moldova on the path of reforms to further develop the standards of democracy, security, the rule of law and economic modernization. For the successful negotiation of these crucial agreements, in 2014 Ms. Gherman was awarded the highest national distinction — the Order of the Republic of Moldova.

In 2013, Ms. Gherman was honoured with the dual role of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. As Deputy Prime Minister, her role was to coordinate the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova, including by the implementation of the European Union-Moldova agreements. Another major responsibility of Ms. Gherman was to chair the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, where she pressed for enhanced international cooperation in investigating trafficking cases and for legal reforms to strengthen the protection of victims, in particular children.

Ms. Gherman has played a central role in adapting the migration policy of the Republic of Moldova to the needs of sustainable development of the country. She was coordinating the implementation of the pilot European Union-Moldova Mobility Partnership and actively participated in the activity of the Global Forum for Migration and Development. Under her leadership, Moldova contributed to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, advocating for the integration of migration into the post-2015 development agenda.

She was elected Member of Parliament in 2014 and served as member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and European Integration until the new Government was formed in 2015, where she resumed her role as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. In June and July 2015, Ms. Gherman was the Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova.

The affirmative legacy of Ms. Gherman's authority on a global scale was best reflected in her leadership of the United Nations global dialogue on strengthening capacities and building effective institutions for the implementation of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and the subsequent adoption of the Chisinau Outcome Statement, which provided a valuable input to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. While coordinating the national efforts to deliver on the post-2015 development agenda, Ms. Gherman focused on strengthening the human rights mechanisms, women's empowerment and the consolidation of Moldova-United Nations cooperation in the field of energy.

From 2009 onward, Ms. Gherman coordinated a wide range of projects implemented with the assistance of the United Nations in Moldova, among them institutional capacity-building as part of the reform of the public administration, confidence-building measures for the population in the areas affected by the unresolved conflict, and promoting a higher representation of women at the decision-making level. Ms. Gherman's involvement has been instrumental, both in Moldova and in the region, for ensuring efficiency in piloting one of the aspects of United Nations reform — the concept of "One United Nations".

In 2014 Ms. Gherman was selected by *The Guardian UK* to rank among the most impressive "Seven women to watch in global politics who are leading change all over the world".

She is a mother to son Mircea Gherman and the daughter of the first President of the Republic of Moldova, Mircea Snegur.

Ms. Gherman speaks Romanian, English, Russian and German.

United Nations S/2016/167

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 February 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 21 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the letter of the Secretary-General reporting on implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) (S/2016/152), which comes across as a copy of his reports on implementation of the Security Council resolutions on humanitarian affairs. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had expected that the Secretariat would learn from its previous mistakes and its open bias in favour of the armed groups, their representatives and the forces and States behind them. However, the letter confirms to the Security Council that the Secretariat's work is marred by inaccuracy and flagrant bias against Syria. The Secretariat avoids mentioning what is clearly the reason for the end of the Geneva round of negotiations, namely that the Riyadh opposition informed the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria that it would announce its withdrawal from the current round. This led the Special Envoy to suspend the talks in order to cover up the fact that the opposition had caused the failure of the Geneva round of negotiations which he had convened on 29 January 2016.

At the invitation of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic travelled to Geneva to attend the negotiations that had been convened in the context of dialogue among Syrians aimed at reaching a political solution to the crisis in Syria. The Saudi Arabian opposition, known as the High Negotiations Commission, posed an obstacle to the negotiations when Saudi Arabia denied it permission to attend. Saudi Arabia reversed its stance under pressure from several quarters. It then allowed the High Negotiations Commission to travel to Geneva, but without naming the members of the delegation or defining its political vision. The purpose of the High Negotiations Commission's arrival in Geneva was to hinder and sabotage the negotiating sessions and strike a blow against any endeavour that could lead to dialogue among Syrians.

The preparatory round was also flawed in several ways. For instance, the Special Envoy was unable to fulfil his responsibility towards the participants. In particular, he was unable to bring together an opposition delegation including all components of the Syrian opposition in the country and abroad. Others were unable to provide a list of terrorist groups and organizations. Rather than proving impartial,

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independent and transparent, the Special Envoy suspended negotiations until a later date in order to cover up the obduracy of the Riyadh delegation and its backers, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The letter of the Secretary-General fails to mention those facts, which are now well known to all.

The Secretary-General refers to a ceasefire. For our part, we wish to state that a ceasefire can be discussed but not imposed on the parties. In accordance with the Vienna statements and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), such discussions should take place among Syrians. Before that can happen, the terrorist groups should be designated and excluded from the ceasefire, as they pose a threat to safety and security, not only in Syria but across the region and the world. A ceasefire can be called once the concerned parties have agreed on arrangements, measures and steps by engaging in dialogue to settle on the details. The mechanism to enact the ceasefire and monitor its implementation should be devised through coordination and cooperation among the Syrian Government and local and field leaders. That approach would preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, two elements that are emphasized in all of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The section of the letter concerning confidence-building measures also shows that the authors are neither objective nor realistic. Such measures would normally emerge from consultations and discussions among the concerned parties. They cannot under any circumstances be applied selectively or before the start of negotiations among concerned parties. The Special Envoy should work to ensure that those parties that are supporting and funding the armed terrorist groups refrain from that course of action and stop intervening on behalf of the groups, which pose a threat to safety and security in Syria, the region and the world. Every possible measure should be taken to put pressure on States sponsors of terrorism, particularly Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to refrain from harbouring the terrorists; stop providing them with weapons, supplies and ammunition; close the terrorist training camps on their territory; and prevent the terrorists from crossing their borders into the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretary-General, his Special Envoy and the Security Council must press the Turkish regime to prevent its army from violating Syrian sovereignty and attacking Syrian territory in support of its armed terrorist proxies. Such action would preserve safety and security in the region and prevent it from descending into all-out war.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised and, yet again, dismayed that the Secretary-General has taken such a biased approach, giving the impression that the United Nations has abandoned its neutrality and become a party to the crisis in Syria. Time and again, Syria has stressed that it is committed to providing all forms of humanitarian assistance to Syrians affected by the crisis, wherever they may be on Syrian territory. It has proved open to cooperation and coordination with all States, United Nations entities and other international organizations active in Syria in order to deliver humanitarian assistance to Syrians affected by the crisis. The facts on the ground show that the Government has made every effort to deliver humanitarian assistance to all of its citizens wherever they may be. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Walid Al-Moualem, stressed during his most recent meeting with the Special Envoy that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic approved the deployment of joint assistance convoys to Dayr al-Zawr, Madaya, Mu'addamiyah, Kafr Batna, Zabadani, Kafraya and Fu'ah, and to everyone who needs it wherever

they may be in Syria. Those humanitarian assistance convoys follow others that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Nations entities have deployed to those areas in the past. The Government has informed the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Damascus that it wishes to deploy regular joint humanitarian and relief convoys, with immediate effect, to the towns of Kafraya and Fu'ah in Idlib governorate and the towns of Madaya and Mu'addamiyah in Rif Dimashq governorate.

Deplorably, the letter of the Secretary-General does not mention that the terrorist groups have attacked humanitarian assistance convoys and Syrian Arab Red Crescent emergency staff. One such incident took place at the entrance to the town of Madaya a few days ago. The letter also deliberately ignores the fact that the armed terrorist groups recently prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching Fu'ah, Kafraya and Madaya for over one month. It neglects to mention that the towns of Nubul and Zahra' were completely besieged for several years until their recent liberation by the Syrian Arab Army. Contrary to what is stated in the letter of the Secretary-General, the crisis was caused by the actions of the armed terrorist groups and by the unilateral coercive economic and financial measures imposed by the United States of America and the European Union. The Syrian Government is fulfilling its constitutional duty towards its citizens by delivering all forms of assistance, whether food, non-food, health or medical, to its citizens who have been affected by the crisis. It seeks to alleviate the impact of the terrorist crimes and the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States of America, France and Britain, all of which lead the hypocrisy and misinformation brigade on the Security Council.

The letter of the Secretary-General makes no reference to the raids carried out by the so-called international coalition led by the United States of America. The raids have destroyed numerous oil and gas facilities, not to mention other components of the economic infrastructure. By way of example, coalition aircraft have bombarded the two electrical power plants in Ridwaniyah, in Aleppo governorate, and the water treatment plant in Raqqah governorate. Those actions have exacerbated the suffering of the Syrian people. Such air attacks and indiscriminate bombings have claimed the lives of numerous civilians and inflicted various injuries on thousands of others. The Secretary-General fails to mention those facts, which have been the subject of numerous letters that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has sent to him and to the President of the Security Council.

The Syrian Government protests in the strongest terms at the omission in the letter of any reference to the terrorist suicide bombings in several Syrian cities. For instance, a series of suicide bombings has taken place in the Zahra' neighbourhood of Homs city. Armed terrorist groups, particularly Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other groups associated with them and the Al-Qaida terrorist organization, have indiscriminately bombed defenceless civilians in their homes, work places and markets, children at school and students at university.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has proved deeply committed to its responsibilities. It has been intent on pushing through numerous national reconciliation processes. It has encouraged fighters to hand over their weapons and ammunition to the Syrian authorities in return for an amnesty. It is determined to

restore safety and peace in the villages, towns and regions where armed groups have taken refuge and used the civilian population as human shields. The Government's policies seek to promote the voluntary return of civilians who were forced out of their towns and regions by armed terrorist groups, which subjected them to abduction, killings, slaughter, looting and pillaging. The Government calls on the Secretary-General to bring pressure to bear on those States that have imposed unilateral coercive measures on the Syrian people to rescind those measures immediately. By so doing, those States would save the lives of Syrian citizens and comply with their stated commitment to humanitarian values. The Government calls on the Secretary-General to ensure that his forthcoming reports give an accurate and objective account of what is happening in Syria and the implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). Otherwise, those reports will mislead global public opinion and the members of the Security Council. That outcome would only prolong the crisis in Syria and the proliferation of terrorism across the region and the world.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/168

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 21 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to transmit information concerning two recent terrorist bombings which, once again, targeted the residential neighbourhood of Zahra' in the city of Homs.

On the morning of Sunday, 21 February 2016, an armed terrorist group detonated two car bombs in succession in the Zahra' neighbourhood of Homs city. According to a preliminary victim count, more than 46 people were killed and more than 110 were injured, most of them seriously. Property and infrastructure at the site were extensively damaged. As we informed you in previous letters, similar attacks on the neighbourhood have claimed the lives of hundreds of women, children and old persons. Despite the scale of the attacks and their human and material cost, the Security Council has remained silent, failing to show any interest or express its condemnation. It has, however, responded to other incidents that were just as alarming and horrific, or indeed less so.

The bombings are part of a series of systematic acts of terrorism perpetrated by armed terrorist groups, which everyone now realizes are the true proxies of the Saudi and Turkish regimes on Syrian soil. Through the bombings, those regimes have responded to revelations regarding their role in sparking and fuelling the Syrian crisis. More specifically, they are attempting to hamper diplomatic efforts at reaching a political solution to the crisis.

The Syrian Government stresses that such terrorist crimes and atrocities will not deter it from fighting terrorism and working towards a political solution to the crisis, among Syrians and under Syrian leadership, leading to the elimination of terrorism and the restoration of security and stability for the Syrian people.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to condemn these terrorist crimes immediately and forcefully. It also calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by taking immediate preventive and punitive measures in respect of States that support and fund terrorism, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. It should prevent those States' regimes from backing terrorism and endangering international peace and security, and prevail on them to fully enforce Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

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I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/169

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2016

Original: English

Thirty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2239 (2015), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2016 and requested me to keep it informed of the situation in Liberia and the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report provides a midterm update on major developments since my report of 13 August 2015 (S/2015/620).

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. Political attention is increasingly focused on the 2017 presidential election, which will be held in a complex political, social and economic situation marked by external economic shocks resulting from the drop in global prices of raw materials, public concern over the Mission's drawdown, challenges posed by the security transition, an increase in public order incidents and limited progress on legislation critical to both the security transition and essential political reforms.

3. The number of candidates for the election continued to grow, together with speculation on potential alliances. Declared candidates include the Vice-President, Joseph Boakai (Unity Party), the Central Bank Governor, Joseph Mills Jones (independent), a Montserrado County Senator, George Weah (Congress for Democratic Change), a Nimba County Senator, Prince Yormie Johnson (independent), a former presidential candidate, Charles Brumskine (Liberty Party), the businessman Benoni Urey (All Liberian Party), the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan (Unity Party), and the former First Lady and Bong County Senator, Jewel Howard Taylor (National Patriotic Party). The Unity Party continued to face departures from its ranks, which culminated in the resignation of four Unity Party legislators during September and October, including the House Speaker.

4. On 14 October, the President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, emphasized in an unscheduled closed-door meeting with the Legislature the need for the passage of bills that would contribute to economic stability and the security transition. On 19 November, in an address to the nation, the President underscored the economic challenges facing the country, while late in November she sought unsuccessfully to

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have the Legislature reconvene for a two-week extraordinary session to achieve progress on key economic issues. The Legislature made some progress on security legislation; on 19 January, the Senate voted in favour of the draft firearms and ammunition control act and transmitted it to the House of Representatives for concurrence, where it remains pending. The President re-emphasized the economic challenges during her annual address to the Legislature on 25 January and announced austerity measures to counteract the effects of an expected shortfall in revenues. She also expressed confidence in the Liberian security institutions in the context of the security transition and their taking over of security responsibilities from UNMIL.

5. During the reporting period, there were several high-profile dismissals and resignations from and appointments to the Government. On 24 August, the President dismissed the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, responsible for international cooperation and economic integration, for inappropriate conduct as part of an investigation into the alleged misuse of funds from the Government of Japan. On 9 October, she dismissed the Minister of Internal Affairs, Morris Dukuly, and accepted the resignation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Augustine Ngafuan. On 10 September and 27 November, respectively, county superintendents in Bong and Grand Bassa Counties resigned from their positions following allegations of corruption and abuse of authority. On 6 January, the President nominated the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations, Marjon Kamara, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Henrique Tokpa as Minister of Internal Affairs; both were confirmed by the Senate on 26 January.

6. The Lofa County by-election, held as a result of the death of a member of the House of Representatives, was conducted peacefully on 29 December, although the deployment of police was delayed because of the late release of funds. Turnout was 32.6 per cent, and 48.6 per cent of those who voted were women. The National Elections Commission successfully produced a pilot breakdown of voters in the by-election by gender at the time the results were announced. In January, the Commission, as part of a project supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, published gender-disaggregated data on voters in the December 2014 senatorial elections.

7. Meanwhile, litigation relating to the 2014 senatorial elections has not been closed, and two cases are still outstanding. The Supreme Court order of 7 August to repeat polls in three precincts in Bong County remains pending, although the independent candidate and current Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Tokpa, decided not to participate in the rerun of the elections. A complaint before the Supreme Court relating to a previously ordered partial recount in Lofa County also remains pending.

8. On 2 and 4 February, during plenary sessions, members of the House of Representatives expressed concern about the security situation in the context of the Mission's drawdown, requested briefings from national security providers and called upon the President to request the United Nations to maintain a considerable UNMIL military and police strength until after the elections in 2017.

B. National reconciliation, political reforms and governance

9. Critical reforms, including the amendment of the Constitution, land reform and decentralization, advanced at a slow pace. Following a setback in the consideration

of the bills on land rights and land authority during an extended session of the Legislature from August to October, the Land Commission embarked on further consultations with stakeholders until its mandate expired on 9 January, although it remained operational after that date. Meanwhile, five of the six land coordination centres that had supported the informal settlement of land disputes were closed because of a lack of funding, creating an additional strain on the capacity of local courts to address land disputes.

10. On 13 August, the President, in a letter to the Legislature, conveyed her views on the 25 proposed amendments presented by the Constitution Review Committee, including her opposition to both the racial requirement for citizenship and the declaration of Liberia as a "Christian State". From 17 to 19 November, the House of Representatives held a retreat with the Committee in Ganta, Nimba County, to consider the views of experts on the proposed amendments. Consultations in the Senate have yet to commence.

11. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights continued to work towards the implementation of the Palava Hut programme for national reconciliation. In September and October 2015, four forums were conducted on Palava Hut practices among various ethnic groups. The resulting report, validated in December, highlighted challenges relating to jurisdiction, operations and general programme implementation. Delays in implementation and the continued lack of capacity of the Commission to lead the process remained a concern.

12. On 15 September, the President issued a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The previous such report had been issued in January 2011. In the report of 15 September, of a total of 207 recommendations, 142 had been or were being implemented, while 18 did not lend themselves to practical implementation. In the report, with respect to lustration, the Supreme Court decision of 2011 that the practice of lustration without due process was unconstitutional is reiterated and advice is requested from the Bar Association before any action is taken. The report indicated that recommendations aimed at fostering good governance, such as payment of reparations and ensuring criminal accountability, would be addressed progressively. On 13 October, the House of Representatives took note of the report and requested additional information from the President, and on 15 October the Senate established a special committee to review the report.

13. There has been some progress in addressing corruption. On 25 August, the former Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority and four co-defendants were convicted of the illegal issuance of private logging permits. The defendants have appealed against the verdict. In November, five senior officers of the Drug Enforcement Agency, including the Chief of Intelligence and the Deputy Chief Investigator, were dismissed following allegations of extortion and bribery. In January, seven senior Liberian National Police officers were suspended and recommended for prosecution following investigations for alleged complicity in armed robberies. In September, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and the Governance Commission completed the draft implementation strategy for the National Code of Conduct, which is aimed at ensuring full compliance with the Code by the end of 2016. Similarly, investigations by the Anti-Corruption Commission led to the trial in December of two former senior officials of the National Port Authority.

However, the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases continued at a slow pace, owing mainly to capacity and funding constraints at the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Ministry of Justice, as well as coordination challenges between the two. In an effort to curb corruption in the judiciary, the Chief Justice suspended two judges on 4 February for interference with due process amounting to corruption.

14. In October, the Public Accounts Committee submitted its findings from public hearings on six General Auditing Commission reports of ministries, agencies and public corporations for endorsement by the plenary of the House of Representatives followed by transmission to the President, with a reminder to implement the recommendations in the reports sent by the Legislature in previous years. The findings of the reports included gross violations of the Public Procurement and Concessions Act of 2010 and the Public Finance Management Act of 2009, poor human resources management and misappropriation of funds. On 27 January, Transparency International issued a global report on perceptions of corruption in which Liberia was ranked joint 83rd out of 168 countries, an improvement from its ranking of 95th out of 175 countries in 2014. According to the same organization, in a regional report published on 1 December, across 28 sub-Saharan African countries, Liberia ranked worst for bribery payments to public officials over the past 12 months and second worst for government efforts to fight corruption.

15. On 9 December, Sweden pledged $5 million over two years to support decentralization reform. UNMIL continued to support the equipment or construction of 10 of the 15 county service centres, which provide public services that were previously available only in Monrovia.

C. Security situation

16. The security situation in Liberia remained generally stable. However, a series of violent incidents demonstrated the continuing potential for destabilization arising from growing social tensions relating to an increase in layoffs and concessions, land disputes, limited access to livelihood opportunities and porous borders. Mob justice resulted in several incidents targeting, in particular, individuals suspected of involvement in armed robberies and ritualistic killings. Such incidents appeared to be on the increase during the reporting period.

17. There were several violent incidents relating to concessions. On 12 October, two security guards at the China Union mine in Bong County were killed by armed robbers. Five suspects were arrested. On 26 October, 50 former employees of a private security company forcibly entered the premises of ArcelorMittal in Grand Bassa County during a protest over benefits allegedly owed to them. Also in Grand Bassa, on 9 November, six armed men attacked the offices of Equatorial Palm Oil in an attempt to steal the payroll cash. In September, at the Cocopa rubber plantation in Nimba County, interventions by the Government and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia calmed workers who had threatened mass action against the non-payment of salaries. However, as the non-payment continued, workers threatened a manager on 3 February and set fire to parts of the plantation on 6 February. In Montserrado County, evictions from and demolitions of illegal structures on land designated for an industrial park proceeded from 18 January to 5 February without serious protest, following proactive UNMIL and government interventions. Occupants in the Capitol Bypass area in Monrovia facing an eviction

notice protested on 6 February, blockaded the road near the police headquarters and threw stones at vehicles until the police dispersed them.

18. There were also several incidents of vigilantism. On 19 August, in Nimba County, a mob fired on three suspected armed robbers, injuring two of them. On 13 September, a fight at a mining camp in Grand Gedeh County resulted in a mob breaking into the camp's police cell and beating a man to death. A total of 40 suspects were arrested. On 2 December, in Monrovia, the discovery of the bodies of two children inside a vehicle resulted in local residents setting on fire the home of the vehicle's owner, who they believed had killed the children for ritual purposes.

19. The death of a motorcyclist in Nimba County, alleged to be a ritualistic killing, led to a mass protest of union members on 30 September against the perceived ineffectiveness of the police in addressing a series of suspected ritualistic killings in the county. The protest turned into a riot when a crowd attacked and ransacked a police depot, freed detainees, burned homes and cars and engaged in widespread looting. Public order was restored by the national police with UNMIL assistance. Forty-five people were arrested and are awaiting trial, 42 of them charged with rioting and arson and 3 with murder.

20. Challenges remained in the ability of the Liberian institutions to respond rapidly and effectively to violent public disturbances and dispense justice. In particular, the inadequate and inefficient deployment of resources across the country and a still weak command and control structure hampered the police response. The police, however, exhibited improved capacity to plan and execute deployment to ensure security at scheduled events, as was demonstrated during two international football matches held in Monrovia on 8 October and 13 November.

D. Regional issues

21. While the security situation in the border areas remained calm, sporadic violence and incidents of illegal farming in the areas bordering Côte d'Ivoire continued to occur. On 1 September, following a fact-finding mission, Grand Gedeh County authorities expressed concern about continued farming activities by armed Ivorian and Burkinabé elements in Liberian territory. According to a complaint lodged with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in one such incident a group of armed Ivorians and Burkinabé reportedly injured a resident of Joe Village, Grand Gedeh County. At the same time, the alleged sale of land by some county officials to Ivorian and Burkinabé nationals further complicated the situation. Meanwhile, on 2 December, an armed attack targeting Ivorian security forces was carried out in Olodio, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 km from the border with Liberia, which resulted in 11 deaths and the flight of 38 persons into Liberia. No evidence was established of involvement in the attack from the Liberian side of the border.

22. The second meeting of the joint council of chiefs and elders was held in Guiglo, Côte d'Ivoire, from 16 to 18 January. The meeting brought together Liberian and Ivorian traditional and community leaders and administrative authorities to discuss the strengthening of cross-border collaboration and mechanisms for improving peace and security in the border areas. It concluded with the signing of a communiqué in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries, reflecting the commitment to coordinated border stabilization efforts, including the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia. During the closing

ceremony, the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, announced that the Ivorian border with Liberia would reopen in March and called for the continued presence of UNMIL in Liberia until after the Liberian national elections in 2017. Subsequently, in a joint letter dated 29 January 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General, both Presidents requested the maintenance of the United Nations missions in the two countries, including the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire quick-reaction force, until after the 2017 elections.

E. Humanitarian situation

23. On 3 September, following an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Margibi County detected on 29 June, Liberia was declared Ebola-free for the second time. However, a new outbreak was detected in Montserrado County on 19 November. As no new cases had been reported during the following 42-day period, Liberia was declared Ebola-free for a third time on 14 January. The effective response to contain both outbreaks, particularly in contact tracing and monitoring, demonstrated that the Government was gradually improving its capacity to handle such emergencies. However, on 15 January, the first confirmed Ebola-related death in Sierra Leone since the country was declared Ebola-fee on 7 November underlined the risk of relapse. The World Health Organization has cautioned that flare-ups of Ebola cases remain likely in the coming months, highlighting the need for sustained vigilance and elevated response capabilities.

24. As at 15 February, Liberia was hosting 31,096 registered Ivorian refugees, of whom 22,597 were residing in camps and 8,499 with host communities. A tripartite meeting involving the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, held in Monrovia on 9 and 10 December, resulted in the voluntary repatriation of 1,117 refugees later that month, despite the continued closure of the border. Although recent attacks along the south-eastern border with Côte d'Ivoire seemed to have slowed the pace of voluntary repatriations, the voluntary return of Ivorian refugees continued; a total of 6,042 have been successfully repatriated and resettled in Côte d'Ivoire since 18 December.

F. Human rights situation

25. In September, Liberia delivered its response to the Human Rights Council on the 186 recommendations in the universal periodic review of May 2015. The Government accepted 147 of the recommendations, including on issues relating to sexual and gender-based violence; access to justice; economic, social and cultural rights; and, in a positive departure from the first cycle of the universal periodic review, in 2011, the criminalization of female genital mutilation. The remaining 39 recommendations were noted, including those relating to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and the abolition of the death penalty. On 19 September, the Government extended a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

26. Liberia further engaged with United Nations human rights mechanisms by finalizing, with UNMIL support, its common core document, which constituted a significant step in addressing the backlog in its reporting on human rights treaty obligations. In October, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against

Women reviewed the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Liberia. In its concluding observations, the Committee called for the elimination of discriminatory and harmful practices, full criminalization of female genital mutilation and measures to increase women's participation in the political sphere. However, implementation of Liberia's national human rights action plan continued to be hampered, largely because of capacity gaps within the leading ministries and key oversight institutions, such as the Independent National Commission on Human Rights.

27. In October, the Commission published its first annual report, covering 2014. In the report, critical human rights issues were highlighted and a series of recommendations formulated relating to education, health, freedom of the press, women's rights, sexual and gender-based violence and pretrial detention. However, the Commission's failure to establish a functional public complaints mechanism and monitoring structures following the issuance of the report limited the effective implementation of its mandate. A list of recommended candidates to the Commission was presented to the President in August 2015. Four commissioners were appointed on 6 January, and two posts still remain vacant.

28. In December, a second judge was appointed to Criminal Court E to adjudicate rape cases. In addition, a bill on domestic violence is currently under review by the Legislature. Public outreach continued with the "He for She" campaign, launched by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on 5 June 2015 to encourage men and boys to stand up against sexual and gender-based violence and promote gender equity and equality. In December, UNMIL launched a campaign against sexual exploitation and abuse, in addition to the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign nationwide.

29. During the reporting period, the Mission monitored and documented more than 15 alleged serious human rights violations committed across the country by Liberian security sector personnel, 13 of which involved police officers, including one rape, six physical assaults and two cases of torture. While internal investigations have been initiated in many cases, progress has been slow. In addition, investigations were ongoing in the case of a 19-year-old woman who, according to the police, hanged herself on 20 October while in police detention in Montserrado County. In another case, on 13 September, the Deputy Director for Operations of the Executive Protection Service allegedly assaulted a woman with a broken bottle, resulting in his dismissal the following day.

30. On 18 December, the Mission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights jointly published a report entitled "An assessment of human rights issues emanating from traditional practices in Liberia", with the aim of drawing to the attention of the Government and other stakeholders the adverse consequences on human rights and the rule of law of some traditional practices. In an official communication, the Minister of Justice informed UNMIL of his decision to instruct relevant ministries and government institutions to implement the recommendations in the report, as appropriate.

G. Economic situation

31. Ebola virus disease and the drop in global commodity prices has had a negative impact on economic recovery and growth in Liberia. Gross domestic product growth

projections were revised downward to 0.3 per cent in 2015, from 0.7 per cent in 2014, owing to a reduction in production and investment in the commodities sector, particularly in iron ore and rubber. Revenue from taxes on income and profit from international trade fell from $41.0 million in the first quarter of the 2014/15 fiscal year to $39.7 million in the same quarter of the 2015/16 fiscal year. The comparative outlook for core revenue fell from $46.5 million in September 2014 to $34.6 million in September 2015. The current account deficit worsened from around 28 per cent of gross domestic product in 2013 to around 31 per cent in 2014, owing mainly to a sharp decline in exports caused by Ebola and lower commodity prices, which were only partially offset by Ebola-related donor assistance and lower oil prices. Gross international reserves declined from $411 million at the end of 2014 to $394 million in September 2015. On 19 January, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning announced that the approved national budget for 2015/16 would need to be reduced by around $70 million (from $622.7 million to $552.8 million).

III. Development of national security and justice capacities

A. Security transition

32. In resolution 2239 (2015), the Security Council emphasized that the Government of Liberia bears primary and ultimate responsibility for security and the protection of its population, affirmed its expectation that the Government would assume fully its complete security responsibilities from UNMIL no later than 30 June 2016, and requested UNMIL, from 1 July 2016, to support the Liberian security agencies in protecting civilians in the event of a deterioration of the security situation that could risk a strategic reversal of peace and stability. Accordingly, 30 June 2016 will signal a clear transition of the Mission's security support to the Government, both in terms of its role as a responder and the cessation of specific security-related tasks. The Government's transition plan includes these tasks and works towards the sustainable assumption of security responsibilities by addressing areas critical to the development of Liberia's security sector, such as leadership, oversight, institutional reform and the decentralization of security institutions. My Special Representative continued to engage actively with the Government and international partners to support progress in all aspects of the security transition.

33. Of the 10 specific security tasks performed by UNMIL when the Government's plan was endorsed by the National Security Council on 6 March 2015, six tasks, including airfield maintenance, security escort for cash transfers, armed security at the two national prisons and static guard duty at three key national installations, have already been handed over to the Government. Progress is being made towards the handover of the remaining four tasks (security for very important persons, inspection of Government-owned weapons, maritime patrolling and explosive ordnance disposal). Funding delays resulted in timeline adjustments for security for very important persons; the task is now scheduled for transfer in May 2016. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2237 (2015), UNMIL will continue weapons inspections until June 2016.

34. In the meantime, delayed action on the passage of key security sector legislation and gaps in funding for security transition activities continue to impede

progress. To date, of the 206 activities that underpin a successful transition of security responsibilities, in accordance with the Government's plan, only 14 per cent have been fully achieved, 65 per cent are on schedule, 4 per cent are behind schedule, 1 per cent are significantly behind schedule, and 16 per cent have not started. It must be recalled that the initial transition plan was drafted and costed at more than $104 million. The funding was subsequently reduced through various rounds of planning to $38 million. As none of the benchmarks or activities were ever reduced, both the Government of Liberia and UNMIL are struggling to perform in the delivery of the plan. In the light of financial challenges facing the country, the Government was able to disburse only $10 million of the $20 million allocated for the transition in the national budget. Revised appropriations within the budget, if endorsed by the Legislature, would result in the final allocation for the transition totalling $13 million rather than the expected $20 million. In the absence of sufficient financial support to the transition process from donors, a stock-taking exercise has been initiated to determine, in line with the available resources, the priority areas that require attention before June, and areas that can be looked at over the longer term. It is expected that this undertaking will also inform future engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

35. Meanwhile, the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization substantially increased their respective deployments across the country. The training of new recruits and in-service training was conducted by both agencies, as well as the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Liberia National Fire Service, the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Armed Forces of Liberia. Efforts with respect to firearms management progressed; all firearms assigned to the army and the National Security Agency have been marked, with those assigned to the national police and the Executive Protection Service to be marked later in February. A comprehensive strategy aimed at establishing county and district security councils was also pursued during the reporting period.

36. However, limited progress was made in the component of the plan seeking to increase professionalism within the security sector. Critical legislation has not been passed, nor has organizational restructuring been implemented. The draft acts on the police, the immigration service and firearms and ammunition control all remain pending before the Legislature. In addition, enabling administrative systems have not been established and components of the plan focused on human security, such as oversight and accountability, justice, and security delivery, have been overlooked, while a whole-of-Government assessment of the broader implications of the transition has yet to occur.

B. National security strategy and architecture

37. Challenges persisted in the effective operation of the Liberian transnational crime unit, because, among other things, its board did not convene regularly and did not provide effective direction. In addition, the lack of a national strategy to combat transnational and serious crimes, the lack of capacity and insufficient partner support, including funding, hampered its functioning. While the Minister of Justice has undertaken to reinvigorate the unit and formally incorporate it into the country's security sector architecture, this has yet to happen.

C. Liberian National Police

38. As at 15 February, the strength of the national police stood at 5,170 personnel, 18.6 per cent of whom were women. On 24 October, 312 new officers, including 99 women, graduated from the police academy. Advocacy by UNMIL for an increased focus on quality over quantity in the training and development of the police, for the targeting of resources to develop skills and for the effective equipment of existing police personnel resulted in a welcome shift in focus; the projected strength of the upcoming recruit class has been revised from 675 to 108.

39. The national police has increasingly demonstrated the ability to plan and deliver training at all levels. During the reporting period, the police academy's mobile training team provided in-service training in a number of areas, including human rights and protection of civilians, forensics and fleet management. In addition, the police academy supported training for the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Executive Protection Service and held a senior management course for 38 officers, including two women officers. This further enhanced leadership and management skills within the police following the leadership training for 79 officers conducted in 2014 by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, which is currently providing an additional leadership training course for 14 Liberian law enforcement officers.

40. Concerted efforts were made to address the limited deployment of the police outside Montserrado County, where nearly 80 per cent of police personnel had previously been deployed. In accordance with the Government's transition plan, and with support from UNMIL, the national police devised a plan for the deployment of officers to the other counties, premised on the Mission's drawdown schedule, population density and crime rates. With financing from the Government's budget for the transition, deployment commenced in December; 367 patrol officers are now deployed to the eight border counties. UNMIL supported these efforts, including through training for senior and middle management to develop command, control and communications capacities. Meanwhile, the national police's professional standards division was decentralized to the regional level, with funding from the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections in order to improve discipline and accountability.

D. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

41. As at 15 February, the strength of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization stood at 2,346 personnel, of whom 30.4 per cent were women. Newly trained recruits were deployed to the counties, bringing the total number of immigration officials deployed outside Monrovia to 1,563. In addition, the Bureau, with the support of UNMIL, provided in-service training on immigration and border security management for 800 officers, including 213 women, with a focus on human trafficking, border control management, document identification and fraud detection, immigration law, border patrol and surveillance and operational planning. The Bureau also completed the drafting of a five-year strategic plan, in line with the draft immigration service act, which addresses legislative and governance reform, human resources development, institutional transformation and revitalization, border security, information management and restructuring.

E. Judicial, legal and corrections institutions

42. Systemic weaknesses in the criminal justice system, including limited internal oversight, weak administrative procedures and an outdated legal framework, continued to cause significant delays in the delivery of justice; pretrial detention dropped slightly to an average of 68 per cent of cases. For instance, of the 199 cases of sexual and gender-based violence in 2015 in Montserrado County, only 8 reached trial. The prison population increased from 1,914 to 2,010 from August 2015 to February 2016, 1,363 of whom were pretrial detainees. The majority of Liberians continued to utilize the traditional justice system for redress, as it is more accessible and responsive.

43. During the reporting period, jury management offices and a unit to facilitate the transfer of cases within the system were established, as were four specialized prosecution units. Consultations on the development of policies on legal aid and witness protection continued. Progress was also made in the justice and security hubs project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund; six additional officers were deployed to support the decentralization of the sexual and gender-based violent crimes unit in the future hubs in Harper, Maryland County, and Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, adding to the three public defenders and three prosecutors previously deployed to those counties as part of the project. A way forward for completing the implementation of the project by aligning it to the transition plan and emphasizing decentralized service delivery by county, rather than by region, was approved in October.

44. The full impact of the significant investment made in the justice system through the project has yet to be registered, however, because of the systemic nature of the aforementioned challenges. Over the past eight years, the Government has endorsed a number of recommendations to address these weaknesses, yet they persist because implementation has not occurred or has been undertaken in an inefficient and uncoordinated manner.

45. Security at corrections facilities remained a concern, despite a reduction in incidents of escapes. Five prison disturbances occurred during the reporting period, resulting from complaints about prolonged pretrial detention or poor treatment. In September, in order to ensure sustainable progress in establishing a professional and functional corrections system in Liberia, UNMIL, together with the prison and probation service of Sweden, trained 25 senior Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation managers, including five women, on strategic issues and leadership skills. All prison superintendents in Liberia also began to use a management development matrix developed by UNMIL to assess senior staff performance on a quarterly basis and facilitate individualized mentoring. Training for 140 newly recruited officers, including 28 women, was to be undertaken with UNMIL support in January to enhance the Bureau's capacity to manage facilities countrywide, but was postponed because of a delay in the disbursement of funds.

F. Armed Forces of Liberia

46. As at 15 February, 2,050 personnel, including 85 women, were serving in the armed forces. The army's deployment remained centralized in Monrovia, along with an engineering company in Gbarnga and a small coastguard detachment at a

forward-operating base in Buchanan. Liberia continued to contribute a platoon to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

47. By resolution 2239 (2015), the Security Council authorized the resumption of the fourth phase of the Mission's drawdown, as a demonstration of its confidence in the ability of the Government to assume fully its complete security responsibilities from UNMIL by 30 June 2016. The proposed reconfiguration of UNMIL, as reflected in my previous report, was considered the minimum capacity required to provide adequate security and protection for United Nations personnel and installations, including for emergency medical services, and a minimum logistical and engineering capacity to support the Mission's operations. The reconfiguration, with the support of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire quick-reaction force, was also considered as having the minimum capacity to provide limited support to the Liberian security agencies in the event of a deterioration of the security situation that could risk a strategic reversal of peace and stability. Meanwhile, UNMIL efforts continued through strategic communications to sensitize the population about the Mission's drawdown and the assumption of security responsibilities by the national authorities.

A. Military component

48. As at 15 February, the UNMIL military strength stood at 3,371 personnel, including 171 women, against the authorized strength of 3,590. The fourth phase of the drawdown of the force to reach a residual level of 1,240 personnel by 30 June continued with the planned reduction of three infantry battalions in Monrovia and in the border areas with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to one infantry battalion in Monrovia, with related enablers for the purpose of providing a rapid response capacity for the national security agencies should the security situation in Liberia seriously deteriorate. Some transport and engineering units would be reduced. With the reduction in the force's capacity, the 50 military observers will be consolidated in the five UNMIL offices (in Gbarnga, Greenville, Harper, Voinjama and Zwedru) and in Monrovia and will work closely with the United Nations civilian police and the field support offices to perform routine monitoring and reporting duties.

B. Police component

49. As at 15 February, the police strength of UNMIL stood at 1,155 personnel against a mandated ceiling of 1,515 personnel (20 per cent women), including 279 individual police and immigration advisers and 876 police personnel in seven formed police units. Two such units were deployed in Monrovia and one each in Gbarnga, Greenville, Tubmanburg, Voinjama and Zwedru. The drawdown of UNMIL police to 606 by 30 June continued progressively, with a target of 226 individual police and immigration advisers in Monrovia and the five field offices and 380 personnel in three formed police units based in Monrovia, Gbarnga and Zwedru.

50. Pursuant to resolution 2239 (2015), the Mission's police component provided targeted support to the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and

Naturalization, with a particular focus on developing leadership and internal management and accountability mechanisms, strengthening command and control and enhancing management capacities at the county level. UNMIL police, in seeking to build national planning capacities for engagement in the transition process, established, in collaboration with the host State authorities, an implementation structure to track progress in the implementation of the transition plan and to jointly coordinate activities towards the accomplishment of the transition benchmarks.

C. Civilian component

51. Pursuant to resolution 2239 (2015), the Mission's civilian component continued to be streamlined and consolidated. Work is ongoing to reduce the number of sites occupied by UNMIL across the country from 73 to 35 by 30 June, in addition to UNMIL headquarters. The field offices in each of the 15 counties will be consolidated into five offices concentrated in major population and transit centres. These offices will continue to advance implementation of the Mission's mandate, in particular with respect to the security transition, human rights, good offices and political support for governance reforms, as well as support to the Government with regard to the protection of civilians. By 15 February, field offices had been closed in Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Kru, Montserrado, Nimba and River Cess Counties, and their responsibilities transferred, respectively, to the offices in Bomi, Bong, Margibi, Maryland and Grand Bassa Counties.

52. As at 15 February, 1,302 civilian personnel, including 182 United Nations Volunteers, were serving with UNMIL, of a budgeted total of 1,455. In total, 23.2 per cent of the civilian personnel were women, including 26.2 per cent of the 484 substantive staff and 21.4 per cent of the 818 administrative staff.

D. Support considerations

53. The rainy season, from May to October, continued to present challenges: the limited road network in Liberia cannot sustain major logistics movements and flight operations were significantly reduced. There continued to be no in-country commercial alternatives to the UNMIL military and transport units that keep supply lines open, as well as serious shortcomings in the national medical system. In order to sustain the deployment beyond Monrovia of UNMIL civilian and police personnel and facilitate the deployment in extremis of military personnel, including from the quick-reaction force, UNMIL will continue to require some critical enabling capabilities, including heavy-lift ground transportation, air capability, sea transportation, engineering capacity and medical facilities. Where feasible, UNMIL will seek to employ commercial alternatives for the provision of enabling capabilities, including through pooled common services with the United Nations country team. As part of a responsible and well-managed drawdown, UNMIL will continue environmental clean-up activities as military, police, civilian and other mission sites are closed and handed over to the Government or private owners and as United Nations-owned equipment is written off and disposed of, where appropriate.

E. Conduct and discipline

54. During the reporting period, there were four allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse against UNMIL personnel and nine of serious misconduct, including one involving UNMIL military personnel in Gbarnga. A national investigating officer was appointed by the troop-contributing country to investigate the Gbarnga case. To achieve the goal of zero instances of sexual exploitation and abuse, UNMIL established committees at its headquarters and in all of its units to monitor, sensitize and report on all issues pertaining to sexual exploitation and abuse. On 9 December, UNMIL launched a campaign to create "Anti-SEA" champions who would lead efforts to respond to allegations and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse at the county level and who would receive complaints and provide assistance to victims through a referral mechanism at the community level. The campaign was successfully expanded countrywide by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

F. Security and safety of United Nations personnel

55. There were no major security incidents affecting United Nations personnel, assets or operations recorded during the reporting period. However, 24 non-weapons-related crimes were committed against United Nations personnel, as well as 5 crimes involving the use of weapons. Three United Nations personnel died from natural causes. There were 115 road traffic accidents involving United Nations personnel and two reports of vandalism to United Nations property. Three incidents of arrest and detention of United Nations personnel were recorded.

V. Observations

56. The successful assumption of security responsibilities by Liberia from UNMIL by 30 June 2016 will be a landmark in the country's history. I am encouraged by the progress made so far in this regard, although much remains to be done for the objectives of the transition plan to be realized in full. I encourage a renewed focus on improving the quality and professionalism of personnel in the Liberian security sector, strengthening their community service orientation and adopting an effective public outreach and engagement strategy for the security transition. These areas are essential to building the trust and confidence of the population in the security sector and to laying the foundations for sustainable peace and stability.

57. I welcome the enhanced performance of the Liberian security agencies and improvements in inter-agency cooperation. As UNMIL continues to draw down its military and police strength while consolidating its civilian presence throughout the country, it is important that national authorities adopt a whole-of-Government approach to comprehensively address the broader implications of the Mission's drawdown. As a first step, a comprehensive national approach to the security transition is essential. I therefore reiterate my call for the Executive and the Legislature to enhance their cooperation to ensure the urgent enactment and implementation of critical legislation relating to the security sector, including the police, immigration service and firearms and ammunition control acts.

58. Liberia is at a critical point in the establishment of a sustainable and reliable security architecture for its citizens. Determining the appropriate timing of the

conduct of the outstanding review of the 2008 national security strategy will be crucial. In addition, the building of capacity of legislative bodies to exercise effective oversight of the security sector and the decentralization of security through the further development of county and district security councils will be vital steps towards strengthening accountability across the sector, ensuring a participatory approach to security and enhancing the response of the relevant institutions to the security needs of communities.

59. The financial challenges faced by the Government in the implementation of the transition plan are of major concern. While the Government must first fulfil its own commitment in this regard, I urge bilateral and multilateral partners to provide support to the security transition, in particular through measures that enhance public trust and confidence in security sector personnel. Failure to do so may result in a fragile security transition that could undermine the many peace consolidation gains made so far in the country. In this regard, I welcome the contribution of the Government of Sweden, which committed an additional $1.2 million through the Justice and Security Trust Fund, to be utilized in the key areas of early warning, oversight, support for prosecutions and corrections, community policing and witness protection.

60. I welcome the actions taken by the Government in response to serious allegations of corruption and misconduct by public officials. It is important that these steps be followed by credible investigations and due process prosecutions to ensure accountability where such allegations are confirmed. Allegations and perceptions of corruption on the part of public officials undermine people's trust in the Government and defeat its efforts to address deep-seated grievances, such as socioeconomic exclusion and other societal and political cleavages, that remain potential drivers of conflict. I urge the Government to undertake more determined action to battle corruption and to engage more energetically with the public on this issue.

61. I am concerned about the ongoing increase in violent public disturbances, particularly as such violence may become more frequent amid persistent economic challenges and may serve as conflict triggers. While attacks against the national police are not the primary objective of these incidents, it is deeply troubling that some of the public disturbances targeted police installations and police officers. These incidents highlight the lack of public trust and confidence in the justice system, of which the police are the most visible representatives. I urge the Government and the judiciary, with the support of the Mission, to examine and effectively address the key factors behind the public distrust of the justice system and to take forward the nationally validated recommendations from the 2013 criminal justice conference, which set out a comprehensive approach to addressing fundamental and endemic weaknesses across the justice system.

62. The incident on 30 September in Ganta, Nimba County, caused by taxi motorcyclists who believed that a colleague had been the victim of a ritualistic killing, illustrates the urgent need for continued improvements in the deployment of security sector services outside Monrovia, the prioritization of limited resources, the expansion of community policing and the strengthening of command and control structures that would enable the police to effectively prevent, respond to and contain public order situations. I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts to deploy the national police outside Monrovia and indications of improvements in its capacity to

plan for and deploy at public events, although the delay in deployment during the Lofa by-election indicates a need for improved integrated security planning, including in the context of preparations for the election in 2017. Response capacity alone will not ensure security for the people of Liberia. I strongly urge the Government to ensure that police deployments are used to strengthen prevention measures at the county level by focusing on outreach and mediation efforts, including through increased emphasis on community policing and the effective functioning of county and district security councils when they are rolled out.

63. Likewise, public concern over suspected ritualistic killings and the consequent violent reactions are deeply troubling. I welcome the joint publication by UNMIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the report on harmful traditional practices that are fundamentally inconsistent with Liberia's international human rights obligations. I strongly urge the Government to implement the recommendations set out in that report and tackle these human rights violations by urgently addressing not only ritualistic killings, but also female genital mutilation and other serious human rights violations. I welcome the continued efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, although I remain deeply concerned about the scale of these offences, and I strongly urge the Government and all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to counter this scourge. I welcome the increased engagement of the Government with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the universal periodic review, the special procedures and the treaty bodies, and I strongly encourage the Government to sustain this engagement.

64. I am concerned, however, at the slow pace of key political and institutional reforms that are essential for promoting and sustaining reconciliation. Greater political commitment by all Liberian institutions and civil society to constitutional reform, decentralization, land reform and good governance, including natural resources management and an efficient, transparent, accountable and independent judiciary, are vital for the Government to be able to address victims' rights and build the trust of the people. I urge the timely consideration and enactment by the Legislature of the draft land rights and land authority acts, as well as the draft local governance act. In addition, I call upon all Liberian stakeholders to renew their commitment to expediting constitutional reform.

65. While progress with regard to national development does have a bearing on many of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, there should be greater rigour in assessing the implementation of each recommendation. Consistent, factual, timely and comprehensive reporting on the implementation process is also essential in order to reassure the public that these recommendations are being taken forward. I encourage the Government to promote a political environment conducive to the full implementation of all the recommendations, including those relating to criminal accountability, which, to date, remain largely unaddressed.

66. While I was troubled by the re-emergence of Ebola in Liberia in November, I am greatly encouraged by the swift and determined response of the national authorities to the limited outbreak, especially the steps swiftly taken to implement contact tracing and monitoring. The re-emergence of Ebola in Sierra Leone only one day after the entire region was declared Ebola-free underscores the potential for

future relapses and the need for caution. It also highlights the importance of continued vigilance and regional cooperation.

67. I welcome the continued efforts by the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to improve coordination on border stabilization, in particular by convening the second meeting of the joint council of chiefs and elders, in January, which built on the quadripartite process reinvigorated in March 2015 after the Ebola epidemic had abated. I also welcome the resumption of the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees in December. These developments demonstrate the progress made in the region towards resilient and sustainable peace. I encourage the two Governments to continue to build a safe and secure border environment to facilitate the ongoing voluntary repatriation of refugees and to mitigate concerns with regard to border violence, as set out in my previous report.

68. As I noted in that report, the conclusion of the security transition should trigger a reimagining of the United Nations engagement in Liberia. The Security Council, in resolution 2239 (2015), requested me to provide to the Council a report by 15 November 2016 with recommendations on the future of UNMIL and possible successor options to continue to support the Government. I therefore encourage the Government again to continue to explore options for bilateral or regional partnerships in preparation for the eventual withdrawal of UNMIL. In addition, I welcome the sustained engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission to accompany Liberia as it continues to make progress in peace consolidation.

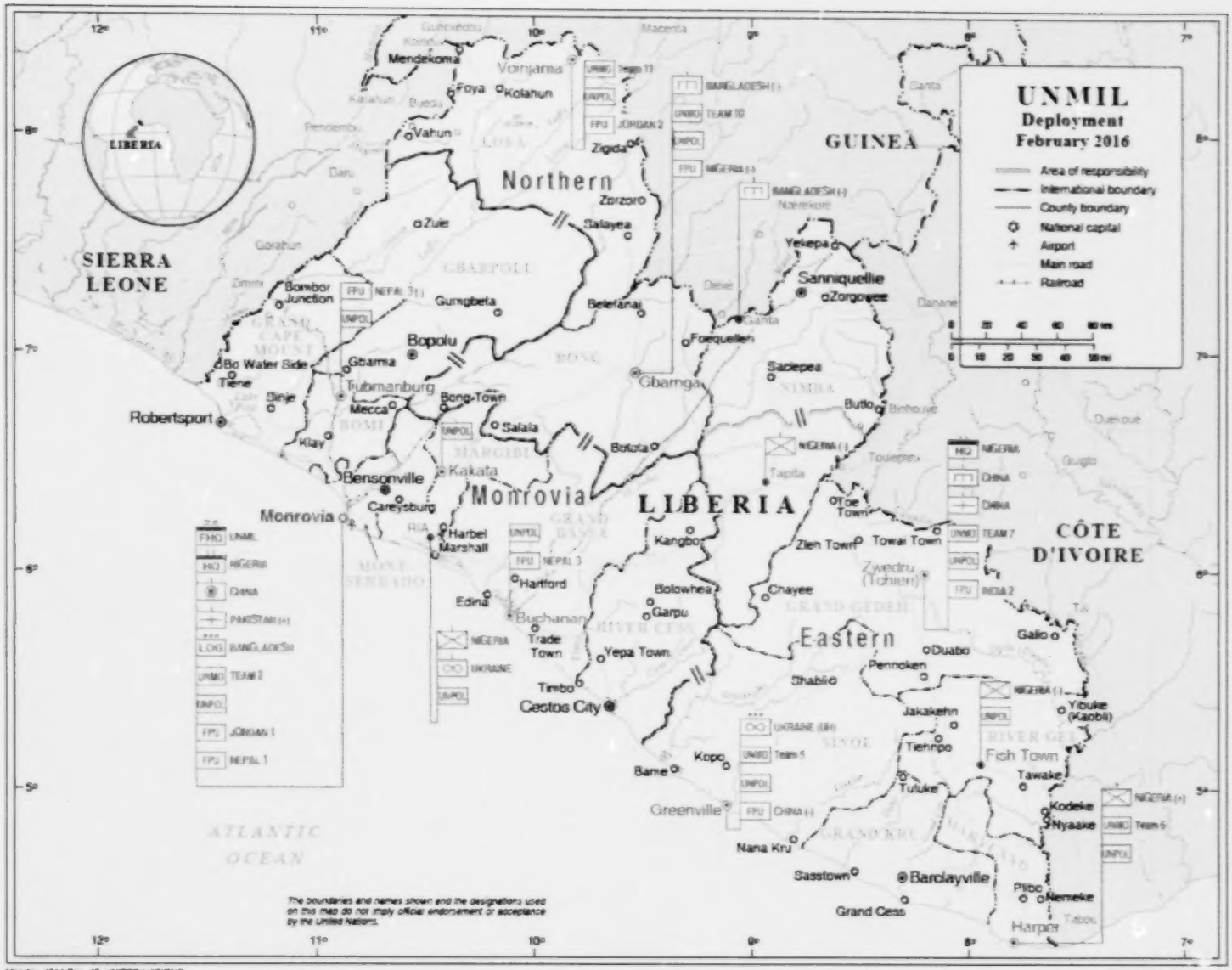
69. I wish to thank my Special Representative for Liberia, Farid Zarif, as well as all UNMIL personnel, for their dedication to sustaining peace and stability in Liberia. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Mano River Union, other regional and subregional organizations, multilateral and bilateral development partners, the Peacebuilding Commission, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations for their continued and sustained commitment and contributions to peace and security in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength as at 15 February 2016

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Argentina	–	–	–	–		3
Bangladesh	7	5	255	267		6
Benin	–	1	–	1		–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2	–	–	2		–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	–	–	–	–		2
Brazil	2	1	–	3		–
Bulgaria	2	–	–	2		–
China	1	2	508	511	140	12
Ecuador	1	–	–	1		–
Egypt	5	–	–	5		4
Ethiopia	5	4	–	9		–
France	–	1	–	1		–
Gambia	1	–	–	1		5
Germany	2	1	–	3		3
Ghana	10	7	808	825		20
India	–	–	–	–	120	10
Indonesia	1	–	–	1		–
Jordan	–	–	–	–	237	15
Kenya	–	–	–	–		18
Kyrgyzstan	2	–	–	2		3
Malaysia	3	1	–	4		–
Myanmar	2	–	–	2		–
Namibia	1	1	–	2		5
Nepal	2	2	15	19	259	13
Niger	2	–	–	2		–
Nigeria	6	7	1 391	1 404	120	26
Norway	–	–	–	–		16
Pakistan	4	9	88	101		–
Poland	1	–	–	1		3
Republic of Korea	–	–	–	–		3
Republic of Moldova	2	–	–	2		–
Romania	2	–	–	2		2
Russian Federation	2	–	–	2		2
Rwanda	–	–	–	–		3

Country	Military component				Formed police units	Police officers
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total		
Serbia	4	–	–	4		–
Sri Lanka	–	–	–	–		16
Sweden	–	–	–	–		11
Switzerland	–	–	–	–		1
Thailand	–	–	–	–		2
Togo	2	1	–	3		–
Turkey	–	–	–	–		4
Uganda	–	–	–	–		6
Ukraine	1	2	172	175		6
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	–	–	–	–		1
United States of America	4	5	–	9		1
Yemen	–	1	–	1		9
Zambia	2	–	–	2		19
Zimbabwe	2	–	–	2		29
Total	**83**	**51**	**3 237**	**14**	**876**	**279**



Map No. 4211 Rev. 40 UNITED NATIONS
February 2016 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2016/170

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2016

Original: English

Note by the President of the Security Council: work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council

The President of the Security Council, building upon the measures set out in the notes by the President of the Security Council contained in documents S/2014/393 of 5 June 2014, S/2013/515 of 28 August 2013, S/2012/937 of 17 December 2012 and S/2010/507 of 26 July 2010, as well as the report of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions contained in document S/2006/997 of 22 December 2006, wishes to state that all members of the Council are committed to implementing the following measures:

1. Improving the transparency of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council by, inter alia:

(a) Encouraging all Chairs to provide non-members of the Council with interactive briefings, as appropriate, and to consider any other opportunities for non-members to provide input to their work;

(b) Encouraging all Chairs to continue to brief the Council, including on relevant reports, in open meetings of the Council, as appropriate;

(c) Encouraging all Chairs, as appropriate, to provide an agreed brief summary of relevant meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council to non-members of the Council, including through press releases;

(d) Requesting the Secretariat to announce all meetings and provisional agendas of the subsidiary organs of the Council to the public (in the *Journal of the United Nations* and on the websites of the subsidiary organs);

(e) Encouraging all Chairs to seek the views of affected or concerned Member States and to foster early and periodic engagement and dialogue between them and relevant sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels throughout the course of their mandate;

(f) Encouraging all Chairs to continue to travel periodically to regions applicable to their work to seek the views of and engage with affected or concerned States and explain and promote the objectives of the subsidiary organ's mandate;

(g) Encouraging the Secretariat to maintain the translation of all United Nations sanctions lists into all official languages of the United Nations;

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(h) Encouraging the Secretariat to continue to ensure that the information on the websites of the subsidiary organs of the Council is accurate and updated in all official languages of the United Nations, including the reports of sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels;

2. Improving the process of selection of Chairs by, inter alia:

(a) Undertaking an informal process with the participation of all Council members as regards appointing the Chairs of the subsidiary organs in a balanced, transparent, efficient and inclusive way;

(b) Encouraging the early appointment of Chairs of subsidiary bodies. To that end, members of the Council will start the informal process of consultations referred to in the note by the President of the Security Council of 17 December 2012 (S/2012/937) as early as possible after each election of members of the Council;

3. Improving the preparation of Chairs by, inter alia:

(a) Acknowledging the support given to incoming Chairs by the Secretariat, and requesting the Secretariat to consider further measures to provide incoming Chairs and their staffs with additional substantive and methodological briefings on the work of relevant subsidiary organs of the Council;

(b) Encouraging outgoing Chairs to provide to incoming Chairs written and oral briefings about the work done during the outgoing chairmanship;

(c) Encouraging early consultations between sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels and incoming Chairs;

4. Improving the interaction and coordination among the subsidiary organs of the Security Council and between the subsidiary organs and the Council as a whole by, inter alia:

(a) Encouraging all Chairs, including those chairing subsidiary organs with similar themes and geographical scope, to meet regularly to discuss common concerns, best practices and ways to improve mutual cooperation, and requesting the Secretariat to provide support for such meetings;

(b) Encouraging Council members to promote greater coordination between the Council as a whole and its subsidiary organs, when considering thematic or country-specific situations;

5. The members of the Council will continue their consideration of ways to improve the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council.

United Nations A/70/750–S/2016/171

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 18 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to draw your attention to the ongoing violation of the provisions of the May 1994 ceasefire agreement by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan recorded for the month of January 2016 (see annex).

During the reporting period, the Azerbaijani hostile military activities resulted in the death of Aramayis Voskanyan, while Armen Petikyan was wounded.

The leadership of Azerbaijan continues to escalate the situation on the ground while refusing to demonstrate political will to register a progress in the negotiations. Furthermore, the Azerbaijani side intensifies the use of heavy weapons, shelling the positions of the Defence Army of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian Armed Forces, as well as continues to undertake aggressive attempts to infiltrate the Armenian positions.

Armenia reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict and once again calls upon Azerbaijan to withdraw snipers and to agree to the creation of an investigative mechanism on ceasefire violations as a step towards building confidence.

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Zohrab **Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 18 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan for January 2016

In the framework of informational exchange between the Ministries of Defence of the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh according to the operation data received from the armed forces of Nagorno-Karabakh

1. On the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh:

   Total number of incidents: 1,359

   Total number of shots: 16,570

   Small arms and light weapons (SALW) (5.45-7.62 mm): 14,865; large-calibre sniper weapons (12.7-14.5 mm): 335; small-calibre sniper weapons (7.62 mm): 1,192; large-calibre machine guns (12.7-14.5 mm): 144; grenade launchers (30-40 mm): 13; small-calibre mortars (60-82 mm): 21.

2. On the border with the Republic of Armenia (see table below):

   Total number of incidents: 190

   Total number of shots: 2,337

   Small arms and light weapons (SALW) (5.45-7.62 mm): 1,858; large-calibre sniper weapons (12.7-14.5 mm): 142; small-calibre sniper weapons (7.62 mm): 178; large-calibre machine guns (12.7-14.5 mm): 148; grenade launchers (30-40 mm): 5; small-calibre mortars (60-82 mm): 6.

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
1.	1 January	Berkaber	0020	SALW	25	
2.		Azatamut	0120	SALW	10	
3.		Shaghat	0130		4	
4.		Yeraskh	0630		1	
5.	4 January	Yeraskh	0535	SALW	1	
6.		Aygehovit	1630	Small calibre sniper weapons	2	
7.		Berkaber	2350	SALW	5	
8.	5 January	Aygehovit	1700	SALW	1	
9.		Yeraskh	2325		2	
10.	6 January	Mosesgegh	2100	SALW	5	
11.		Berkaber	1745	Large calibre sniper weapons	6	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
12.	7 January	Chinari	1030	SALW	11	
13.			1200		30	
14.			1620	SALW	30	
				Small calibre sniper weapons	1	
15.		Berdavan	1050	SALW	20	
16.		Aygepar	1105	SALW	2	
17.			1830	SALW	20	
18.		Berkaber	1120	SALW	2	
19.			2020	SALW	4	
20.	8 January	N. Karmiraghbyur	0045	SALW	9	
21.			2230	SALW	3	
22.		Aygepar	0200	SALW	7	
23.			0200		5	
24.			2155		3	
25.			2230		8	
26.		Yeraskh	0330		1	
27.		Berkaber	1700	Small calibre sniper weapons	4	
28.		Mosesgegh	2230	SALW	10	
29.	9 January	Yeraskh	0035	SALW	1	At 2130 hours near the village of Yusifjanli, on the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh, soldier **Aramayis Voskanyan** was killed by the Azerbaijani side
30.			2230		3	
31.		N. Karmiraghbyur	0315	SALW	8	
32.		Aygepar	0630	SALW	12	
33.			0820	SALW	13	
34.			1835	Small calibre sniper weapons	9	
35.		Berkaber	2050	SALW	20	
36.		Chinari	2225	SALW	15	
37.	10 January	Yeraskh	0000	SALW	1	
38.			2000		1	
39.		Aygepar	0800	SALW	38	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
40.	11 January	N. Karmiraghbyur	0220	SALW	2	
41.		Yeraskh	0405		1	
42.		Barekamavan	1240	SALW	20	
				Small calibre sniper weapons	1	
43.	12 January	Aygedzor	1210	Large calibre sniper weapons	12	At 1530 hours near the village of Jraberd, on the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh, soldier **Armen Petikyan** received shrapnel wounds from the Azerbaijani side
44.		Chinari	1930	Large calibre machine guns	5	
45.			1930	Large calibre sniper weapons	15	
46.		Berkaber	1650	SALW	15	
47.		Aygepar	2015	Small calibre sniper weapons	2	
48.	13 January	Berkaber	0017	SALW	10	
49.			0022		10	
50.		Paravaqar	0334	SALW	12	
51.			2210	SALW	15	
52.		Vazashen	2200	Large calibre machine guns	40	
53.	14 January	Chinari	0930	Large calibre sniper weapons	7	
54.				Small calibre sniper weapons	4	
55.			1150	Small calibre sniper weapons	17	
56.			1155		12	
57.			1320	SALW	10	
58.			1605		10	
59.			1605	Small calibre sniper weapons	3	
60.			1805		15	
61.		N. Karmiraghbyur	1020	SALW	20	
62.		Aygedzor	1130	SALW	20	
63.				SALW	35	
64.				Small calibre sniper weapons	15	
65.			1320	SALW	20	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
66.			1605	SALW	10	
67.				SALW	15	
68.		Aygepar	1335	SALW	12	
69.			1430		8	
70.			1720		3	
71.			1800		30	
72.		Mosesgegh	1555		20	
73.		Kayanavan	1800	SALW	15	
74.			1930	Small calibre sniper weapons	10	
75.	15 January	Chinari	0410	Small calibre sniper weapons	10	
76.			0605	Large calibre sniper weapons	2	
77.			1045	Large calibre machine guns	5	
78.			1045		7	
79.			2255	SALW	7	
80.		Aygepar	1100	SALW	5	
81.		Mosesgegh	1640		10	
82.			1650		10	
83.		Khndzorut	1900	SALW	10	
84.	16 January	Berdavan	0030	SALW	5	
85.			2030	SALW	70	
86.		Chinari	0430	Large calibre sniper weapons	1	
87.		Mosesgegh	1100	SALW	20	
88.		Vazashen	1725	SALW	6	
89.				SALW	20	
90.		Khndzorut	1800	SALW	8	
91.		Aygepar	1820	Small calibre sniper weapons	10	
92.		Yeraskh	1840	SALW	1	
93.	17 January	Berdavan	1630	SALW	20	
94.		Aygedzor	1815		10	
95.		Yeraskh	2130	SALW	1	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
96.	18 January	Chinari	1500	Large calibre sniper weapons	6	
97.				Large calibre machine guns	6	
98.			1615	Large calibre sniper weapons	2	
99.		Aygedzor	1645	SALW	30	
100.				SALW	30	
101.		Yeraskh	2350	SALW	1	
102.	19 January	Aygedzor	1110	SALW	50	
				Small calibre sniper weapons	20	
				SALW	20	
103.	20 January	Aygepar	2035	Small calibre sniper weapons	10	
104.		Yeraskh	1400-1420	SALW	2	
105.	21 January	Vazashen	0000	SALW	20	
106.				SALW	30	
107.				Large calibre sniper weapons	15	
108.		Aygepar	0945	SALW	20	
109.			1000		7	
110.			1010		15	
111.		Chinari	1000	SALW	20	
112.			1105	SALW	40	
				Small calibre sniper weapons	8	
113.			1530	SALW	50	
114.			2320	Small calibre sniper weapons	4	
115.		Aygedzor	1030	SALW	25	
116.			1050		30	
117.			1055	SALW	40	
118.			2110	SALW	10	
119.			2140	SALW	30	
120.		N. Karmiraghbyur	1110	SALW	2	
121.			2125		2	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
122.		Paravakar	1615	SALW	10	
123.		Koti	1700	Large calibre sniper weapons	22	
124.			1710	Large calibre machine guns	25	
125.		Yeraskh	1820	SALW	1	
126.		Agarak	2055	SALW	10	
				SALW	10	
127.		Movses	2100	SALW	15	
128.	22 January	Vahan	0045	SALW	20	
129.		Yeraskh	0410	SALW	2	
130.			0505		1	
131.			0515		2	
132.			2030		6	
133.		Vazashen	1400	Large calibre sniper weapons	20	
134.			1617	Large calibre sniper weapons	10	
135.		Paravakar	1550	SALW	15	
136.			1605	SALW	20	
137.		Berkaber	1843	SALW	5	
138.		Aygepar	2150	Small calibre sniper weapons	2	
139.	23 January	Yeraskh	0020	SALW	1	
140.			2152		1	
141.			2210		1	
142.			2215		1	
143.			2220		1	
144.			2230		1	
145.		Baghanis	0030	SALW	10	
146.		Movses	1100		7	
147.		Paravakar	1325	SALW	50	
148.			1645	SALW	3	
149.		Vazashen	1332	SALW	20	
				Large calibre sniper weapons	10	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
150.		Aygepar	1850	SALW	1	
151.			2125		3	
152.		Chambarak	1900	SALW	100	
153.		Aygedzor	2300	SALW	10	
				Large calibre sniper weapons	4	
154.	24 January	Aygepar	0945	SALW	2	
155.			2040	Small calibre sniper weapons	1	
156.			2225	SALW	2	
157.		Movses	1050	SALW	7	
158.		Vazashen	1845	Small calibre sniper weapons	2	
159.		Paravaqar	2205	SALW	6	
160.		Yeraskh	2235		1	
161.	25 January	Aygepar	0955	SALW	3	
162.		Yeraskh	1545	SALW	1	
163.	26 January	Vazashen	0510	Large calibre sniper weapons	10	
164.		Yeraskh	2100	SALW	1	
165.			2225		1	
166.		Aygepar	2250		4	
167.	27 January	Yeraskh	0210	SALW	1	
168.	28 January	Aygepar	0910	SALW	10	
169.			1010	Small calibre sniper weapons	13	
170.			1010	SALW	6	
171.		N. Karmiraghbyur	1150	SALW	15	
172.		Movses	1250	SALW	5	
173.		Aygedzor	1300		30	
174.		Chinari	1420		25	
175.		Yeraskh	2000		1	
176.		Vazashen	2120		5	
177.		Mehrab	2220		5	

No.	*Date*	*Direction*	*Time*	*Type of weapon*	*Ammunition*	*Results of incidents*
178.	29 January	Aygepar	0150	SALW	4	
179.		Berkaber	1435	Small calibre sniper weapons	3	
180.		Vazashen	2105	SALW	6	
181.			2335	SALW	15	
182.		Paravakar	2125	Large calibre machine guns	30	
183.	30 January	Chinari	2000	SALW	30	
184.		Berkaber	0750-0800	Small calibre mortars	6	
				Grenade launchers	5	
				SALW	8	
185.		Berdavan	1745	Large calibre machine guns	30	
186.		Shagahat	1825	SALW	5	
187.	31 January	N. Karmiraghbyur	0050	SALW	5	
188.		Aygepar	0120	SALW	2	
189.		Paravakar	0205	SALW	3	
190.		Yeraskh	0320	SALW	1	

United Nations S/2016/172

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 February 2016

Original: English

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015), 2204 (2015), 2216 (2015) and the statements of its President dated 15 February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/3), 29 August 2014 (S/PRST/2014/18) and 22 March 2015 (S/PRST/2015/8) concerning Yemen,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen,

Expressing concern at the ongoing political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges in Yemen, including the ongoing violence, and threats arising from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of weapons,

Reiterating its call for all parties in Yemen to adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation, reject acts of violence to achieve political goals, and refrain from provocation,

Reaffirming the need for all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable,

Expressing its support for and commitment to the work of the Special Envoy for Yemen to the Secretary-General, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, in support of the Yemeni transition process,

Expressing its grave concern that areas of Yemen are under the control of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and about the negative impact of their presence, violent extremist ideology and actions on stability in Yemen and the region, including the devastating humanitarian impact on the civilian populations, *expressing* concern at the increasing presence and future potential growth of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL also known as Da'esh) affiliates in Yemen and *reaffirming its resolve* to address all aspects of the threat posed by AQAP, ISIL (Da'esh), and all other associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities,

Recalling the listing of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and associated individuals on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List and *stressing* in this regard the need for robust implementation of the measures in paragraph 2 of resolution 2253 (2015) as a significant tool in combating terrorist activity in Yemen,

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Noting the critical importance of effective implementation of the sanctions regime imposed pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) and resolution 2216 (2015), including the key role that Member States from the region can play in this regard, and *encouraging efforts* to further enhance cooperation,

Recalling the provisions of paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015) imposing a targeted arms embargo,

Gravely distressed by the continued deterioration of the devastating humanitarian situation in Yemen, *expressing serious concern* at all instances of hindrances to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, including limitations on the delivery of vital goods to the civilian population of Yemen,

Emphasising the necessity of discussion by the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014) ("the Committee"), of the recommendations contained in the Panel of Experts reports,

Determining that the situation in Yemen continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Reaffirms* the need for the full and timely implementation of the political transition following the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, and in accordance with resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015), 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015), and with regard to the expectations of the Yemeni people;

2. *Decides* to renew until 26 February 2017 the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014), *reaffirms* the provisions of paragraphs 12, 13, 14 and 16 of resolution 2140 (2014), and *further reaffirms* the provisions of paragraphs 14 to 17 of resolution 2216 (2015);

Designation Criteria

3. *Reaffirms* that the provisions of paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014) and paragraph 14 of 2216 (2015) shall apply to individuals or entities designated by the Committee, or listed in the annex to resolution 2216 (2015) as engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Yemen;

4. *Reaffirms* the designation criteria set out in paragraph 17 of resolution 2140 (2014) and paragraph 19 of resolution 2216 (2015);

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5. *Decides* to extend until 27 March 2017 the mandate of the Panel of Experts as set out in paragraph 21 of resolution 2140 (2014), and paragraph 21 of resolution 2216 (2015), *expresses its intention* to review the mandate and take appropriate action regarding the further extension no later than 27 February 2017, and *requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary administrative measures as expeditiously as possible to re-establish the Panel of Experts, in consultation with the Committee until 27 March 2017 drawing, as appropriate, on the expertise of the members of the Panel established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014);

6. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to provide a midterm update to the Committee no later than 27 July 2016, and a final report no later than 27 January 2017 to the Security Council, after discussion with the Committee;

7. *Directs* the Panel to cooperate with other relevant expert groups established by the Security Council to support the work of its Sanctions Committees, in particular the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established by resolution 1526 (2004) and extended by resolution 2253 (2015);

8. *Urges* all parties and all Member States, as well as international, regional and subregional organizations to ensure cooperation with the Panel of Experts and *further urges* all Member States involved to ensure the safety of the members of the Panel of Experts and unhindered access, in particular to persons, documents and sites, in order for the Panel of Experts to execute its mandate;

9. *Emphasizes* the importance of holding consultations with concerned Member States, as may be necessary, in order to ensure full implementation of the measures set forth in this resolution;

10. *Calls* upon all Member States which have not already done so to report to the Committee as soon as possible on the steps they have taken with a view to implementing effectively the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014) and paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015) and *recalls* in this regard that Member States undertaking cargo inspections pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 2216 (2015) are required to submit written reports to the Committee as set out in paragraph 17 of resolution 2216 (2015);

11. *Recalls* the Informal Working Group on General issues of Sanctions report (S/2006/997) on best practices and methods, including paragraphs 21, 22 and 23 that discuss possible steps for clarifying methodological standards for monitoring mechanisms;

12. *Reaffirms* its intention to keep the situation in Yemen under continuous review and its readiness to review the appropriateness of the measures contained in this resolution, including the strengthening, modification, suspension or lifting of the measures, as may be needed at any time in light of developments;

13. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

United Nations S/2016/173

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 February 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 23 February 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 8 February 2016 from Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (see annex). The letter outlines some of the decisions adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa and Johannesburg, in January and June 2015, respectively.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Addis Ababa, 8 February 2016

I wish to bring your kind attention to the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union Assembly/AU/Dec.547(XXIV) and Assembly/AU/Dec.586(XXV), adopted in Addis Ababa and Johannesburg, in January and June 2015, respectively.

In the above-mentioned decisions, the Assembly, among others, reiterated its request for the suspension of the proceedings against President Omar Al Bashir and urged the Security Council to withdraw the referral case in the Sudan, as well as requested the termination or suspension of the proceedings against Deputy President William Samoel Ruto of Kenya until African concerns and proposals for amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) are considered. Regrettably these requests have either not been acted upon or were turned down, with the opposition of some members of the Security Council, at the time.

As you are aware, the continent is grappling with conflicts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, South Sudan, Somalia and the Darfur region, including a resurgence of terrorist activities in Kenya, Nigeria and Mali, just to mention a few. In our common determination to resolve the peace and security of the continent, it has become ever more imperative that the attention of our leaders is not distracted with incessant cases before ICC to the detriment and threat of instability to our countries and our dear continent. This is even more so when a mere referral by the Security Council does not automatically remove the immunity of Heads of State, as the ICC case in Darfur shows.

Let me quote from the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, on behalf of the African Union to the Fourteenth Assembly of States parties to the Rome Statute of ICC: "We firmly believe that, Africa's commitment to solve its problem by itself should be appreciated, and the trend of lack of trust must come to its end. Africa is headed in the right direction and deserves the support of the international community in its fight against terrorism that is shaking global peace and stability. Intimidating African leaders will serve no purpose than derailing their attentions and efforts in their fight against the scourges of terrorism".

It is in this vein that the Assembly of Heads of State and government called for the establishment of an Open-ended Ministerial Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on ICC to engage with the Security Council on all concerns of the African Union in its relationship with ICC. In fact, at the just concluded Twenty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly that took place from 30 to 31 January 2016, the African Union Heads of State and Government reiterated the need for the Ministerial Committee to meet with the Security Council to engage on all issues that have been consistently raised by the African Union.

I wish to inform you that, under the chairpersonship of Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Minster for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the members of the Ministerial Committee intend to undertake a working visit to United Nations Headquarters in March 2016 to engage with the Security Council on all issues that have been consistently raised by the African Union.

I am confident that you will extend the necessary cooperation to the Ministerial Committee by facilitating the meeting between the Ministerial Committee and the Security Council, with a view to ensuring that this request by African leaders is adequately and satisfactorily acted upon.

(*Signed*) Erastus **Mwencha**
Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission

United Nations S/2016/174

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 March 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 23 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the twenty-fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/156).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the positions that it has previously communicated in its identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). In its current response, it would also like to stress the following points:

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic rejects the attempts made by the United Nations Secretariat and certain Western States on the Security Council to deny the right of States, under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to defend themselves, their people and their territory from terrorism and aggression. It is unacceptable for the Secretariat to take a negative stance regarding the successes achieved in the war against foreign-backed terrorism by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies, which have liberated numerous regions of Syrian territory where armed terrorist groups had been active; broken the siege that the terrorists had imposed on such towns and villages as Nubul and Zahra'; and restored security and stability to other areas. Those successes have opened the way for displaced persons to return to their areas and homes. The Government attaches great importance to the return of those people who were forcibly displaced and is doing everything possible to ensure that they can return and settle down again.

2. The Syrian Government is committed to its constitutional responsibilities and its obligations under the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council. It therefore reaffirms its right to combat terrorism until the liberation of all the areas of activity of the armed terrorist groups, which are supported and funded by foreign parties, particularly Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Secretariat continues to describe the groups as non-State armed groups, a term that is designed to sidestep the relevant Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions and appease certain Member States of the United Nations. The groups are in fact openly associated with such terrorist groups as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah

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Front and Al-Qaida. As the United Nations itself recognizes, their members include foreign terrorists from over 80 countries (see paragraphs 7, 9, 13 and 40 of the report).

3. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its firm position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership and without preconditions. It further stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all of the armed terrorist groups active in Syria have been eradicated.

4. In drafting the report, the Secretariat has relied on undocumented sources and information. In so doing, it has followed the example of other United Nations entities, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which takes its information on Syria from such sources, including the so-called Syrian Observatory and Doctors without Borders — both of which are well known for their links to Western intelligence services — and Physicians for Human Rights. The Syrian Government rejects that approach, whose purpose is to demonize and denigrate the Syrian Government in international forums, bring about a foreign intervention on its territory, and vilify any party that supports its war on terrorism. Once again, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic asks why, as in paragraphs 5 and 14, the report discusses events and allegations that the United Nations is unable to verify. The answer is clear: the report of the Secretariat on humanitarian affairs is profoundly politicized. Once again, we ask the Secretariat to exercise restraint and refrain from adopting biased positions on Syria that serve the agendas of certain Western, regional and Arab States that are hostile to Syria and its people.

5. The Syrian Government finds it deplorable that the Secretariat deliberately ignores the information that it transmitted in identical letters dated 18 January 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council concerning the horrific massacre of defenceless civilians carried out by ISIL in the Baghiliyah suburb in Dayr al-Zawr governorate (S/2016/46). ISIL killed more than 280 civilians, most of whom were elderly people, women and children, and abducted some 400 civilians. The only explanation for that omission is that the Secretariat is biased against the Syrian Government.

6. The Syrian Government reiterates its firm rejection of the claims made in paragraphs 6, 7, 9 and 14 of the report, which show that the Secretariat is heavily biased the against Russian Federation's support for the Government's war on terrorism. Such support was provided at the request of the Syrian Government with a view to fighting armed terrorist groups that are supported by a large number of well-known States in the region and the world. The Syrian Government also strongly rejects the Secretariat's attempts to equate the counter-terrorism efforts of the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and the Russian Air Force with the air bombardment of infrastructure, services, gas and oil facilities being carried out by the so-called United States-led coalition forces, which have bombarded the economic, service and oil and gas infrastructure, killing hundreds of civilians in a bare-faced violation of all of the principles of international law. The Syrian Government stresses that any attempt on the part of the Secretariat to confer legitimacy on the actions of the so-called coalition would constitute a dangerous precedent in international law, and would amount to a frank invitation for others to violate the Charter of the United Nations under various pretexts. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns the Secretariat's conduct and rejects all of the allegations levelled at the

Syrian-Russian counter-terrorism efforts. It reiterates that all operations have been and continue to be directed against the terrorist groups, their members and their supply lines.

7. The Syrian Government notes that the report (S/2016/156) describes the valuable nature of the natural reconciliation processes in the areas of Qadam, Wadi Barada and Wa'r. It reiterates that the purpose of the national reconciliation processes is to save lives and restore security and stability in the areas affected by the armed terrorist groups. Successful reconciliation processes have enabled numerous Syrians to return to the homes and property that they had left behind. The Syrian Government has done its utmost to sustain those reconciliation processes, and to move beyond the violations that some have endured in order to preserve the greater good. It continues to make arrangements for new local reconciliation processes covering all areas with a view to achieving reconciliation at the national level and allowing those Syrians who have borne arms to return to their home country and be reintegrated in society.

8. The Syrian Government rejects the charges levelled against it by the so-called Independent International Commission of Inquiry, which has shown in word and deed that it is not independent and is heavily skewed in favour of the agendas of Western, regional and Arab States whose primary purpose is to divide the land and people of Syria.

9. At home and abroad, in word and in deed, month after month, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has shown its commitment to delivering humanitarian assistance to all affected Syrian citizens and those with a similar status across the country. The facts on the ground, as attested in paragraphs 24, 27 and 28 of the report bear witness to its commitment. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised that the Secretariat attempts to attribute successes in humanitarian aid delivery to the United Nations alone without giving due credit to the Syrian Government, forgetting that, were it not for the Syrian Government's cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations active in Syria, the convoys would have been unable to deliver humanitarian and other assistance to beneficiaries affected by terrorism. Even more surprisingly, the authors of the report downplay the delivery of humanitarian assistance to millions of people who have been affected by the crisis. That approach can only be construed as a deliberate endeavour to disparage the Syrian Government and further politicize the humanitarian issue in Syria.

10. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the difficulties and challenges facing the delivery of humanitarian assistance are, first and foremost, a result of the proliferation of foreign-backed armed terrorist groups across Syria and the security threat that they pose. The actions of the Syrian Government and its allies are aimed at eradicating such armed terrorist groups as ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Army of Conquest, the so-called Army of Islam and other terrorist groups and organizations associated with Al-Qaida. The efforts of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its national army are aimed at restoring security and stability throughout the country, something that would open the way for humanitarian assistance to be delivered without the obstacles posed by armed terrorist groups. There would be no security concerns, as the safety of humanitarian workers would be guaranteed. It would be possible to ensure that the assistance reached its rightful civilian beneficiaries without falling into the hands of

the armed terrorist groups, which have been profiting from aid by selling it on at exorbitant prices to the civilians whom they besiege and keep confined to their homes, neighbourhoods and towns. The Syrian Government also wishes to point out that one of the main shortcomings of the humanitarian and relief assistance efforts is lack of funding for the humanitarian response plan, a problem that persists despite the commitments made by donor States. Syria hopes that the donors will fulfil their commitments in 2016.

11. Paragraph 30 of the report states that the United Nations has submitted 55 requests for joint humanitarian assistance convoys. The Syrian Government is surprised at that assertion. Memorandum No. 29 of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria, dated 10 January 2016, mentions requests regarding 32 locations for implementation in the first quarter of 2016. It also states that 14 requests from 2015 remain pending and due for implementation in 2016. That would bring the total number of requests submitted by the United Nations to 46, rather than 55 as stated in the current report. The Syrian Government wishes to clarify that it has responded to 14 requests for joint convoys, respectively to Dayr al-Zawr; Kafraya and Fu'ah in Idlib governorate; Madaya, Zabadani, Bludan, Tall, Mu'addamiyah and Kafr Batna in Rif Dimashq governorate; Wa'r in Homs governorate; and Sabburah, Harbnafsah, Muhradah, Salamiyah and Suqaylabiyah in Hama governorate. The Syrian Government takes note of the United Nations proposals regarding the areas of Muhradah, Salamiyah and Suqaylabiyah; Darah al-Kabirah in Homs governorate, in the case of the World Food Programme (WFP); and Duma in Rif Dimashq governorate, in the case of the World Health Organization. Approvals were granted for the deployment of joint humanitarian assistance convoys in summer 2015 to such locations as Zamalka and Arbin in Rif Dimashq governorate and Nubul and Zahra' in Aleppo governorate. However, the United Nations did not act on those approvals. The Syrian Government deplores the Secretariat's irresponsible stance regarding the issue, which can only be interpreted as an attempt to target the Syrian Government and place pressure on it for purely political reasons that have to do with the agendas of certain States.

12. There are now 19 registered non-governmental organizations authorized to operate in Syria, as opposed to 16 as stated in the report. The Syrian Government is surprised that the Secretariat has not kept up to date on that issue. Nor have the authors of the report reflected the content of the letter dated 16 December 2015 from the Syrian Government to the Resident Coordinator in Syria concerning strengthening the work of foreign non-governmental organizations. The letter states that there is no objection to an increase in the number of field visits in general, provided that due regard is given to the security situation, and that such activities take place in cooperation with the competent authorities. It states that there is no objection, in principle, to an expansion of the field presence on a case-by-case basis and as necessary with a view to implementing a given project within specific conditions and parameters. It further states that there is no objection, in principle, to a request for a direct partnership with civil society organizations, on a case-by-case basis and within specific conditions and parameters.

13. The Syrian Government rejects the Secretariat's attempts to equivocate regarding the so-called besieged areas, notably by inflating or downplaying the numbers of inhabitants in those areas according to their whims and motives. In its letter dated 25 August 2015 (S/2015/664) responding to a previous report of the Secretary-General, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic made the same

point, noting that the number of people besieged in Dayr al-Zawr was 300,000 rather than 200,000 as claimed by the United Nations, while the number of persons besieged in Fu'ah and Kafraya was 35,000, not 12,500. The Syrian Government also recalls its letter dated 29 July 2014 (S/2014/547) responding to the fifth report of the Secretary-General, in which it stated that the civilians remaining in the Darayya area, of whom there were 4,000, had been able to reach Mu'addamiyah. It follows that the people who are left in Darayya are not civilians.

14. The Syrian Government is surprised that the Secretariat is once again referring to the siege of Yarmouk camp and putting the numbers involved at 6,000 people. This is a fatuous idea, and there is no justification for including it in such reports. Is the Secretariat even aware that terrorist groups belonging to ISIL and the Nusrah Front are present in the camp? Does it want the Syrian Government to leave the road wide open so that they can enter Damascus? The Syrian Government has in fact approved the request submitted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to facilitate access to Yarmouk Camp, Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham in Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates with a view to providing the Palestine refugees and other civilians with food, clean water, health care, winter materials and other humanitarian supplies and services. The Secretariat's failure to address those facts in a transparent manner is deplorable. A total of 123,783 parcels of food aid have been delivered to the inhabitants of the camp since 2014. The Palestine refugees in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham are inhabitants of Yarmouk camp who were displaced from the camp after the terrorist organization ISIL overran it in April 2015 in collusion with the terrorist Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups present inside the camp. Over the last few months, those groups have seized large quantities of assistance intended for Palestine refugees in the areas in question.

15. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns the Secretariat's persistence in downplaying what is being done to deploy humanitarian assistance convoys to hotspots, a process that the Syrian Government has facilitated in recent weeks. The Syrian Government has agreed to requests submitted by the United Nations, whether jointly or individually, and by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, to the following places, Dayr al-Zawr; Yarmouk camp in Damascus governorate; Yalda, Babila, Bayt Saham, Zabadani, Madaya, Bludan, Mu'addamiyah, Kafr Batna, Duma, Tall, eastern Hurnah and Wadi Barada in Rif Dimashq; Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate; Harbnafsah and Sabburah in Hama governorate; Wa'r and Darah al-Kabirah in Homs governorate; and Raqqah, Shaddadi, Arishah and Markada in Hasakah governorate. Some of the approvals have not yet been acted upon, and some are still under way; the United Nations has been late in acting on certain approvals.

16. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its position that cross-border assistance is futile, and condemns once more the lack of transparency with which the authors have chosen to cover that topic. The notifications being sent to the Syrian Government are riddled with inaccurate figures, information, numbers of beneficiaries and particulars on which parties collect aid to distribute it to civilian recipients. As a result, the Syrian Government has no way of knowing whether, how, and by whom humanitarian assistance is being distributed. What is certain is that cross-border assistance is finding its way into the hands of the armed terrorists, or they are appropriating it, distributing some of it to their members and selling the

rest to civilians at inordinate prices on the black market. The members of the Security Council must be aware that the Turkish regime and its intelligence apparatus are using cross-border humanitarian assistance convoys to smuggle in weapons for the armed terrorist groups that serve as its proxies.

17. The Syrian Government recalls the position expressed in its letter dated 29 July 2014 responding to the fifth report of the Secretary-General on implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) (S/2014/547), namely that there is a need to cooperate with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the primary partner for United Nations relief activities in Syrian territory, in the distribution of assistance brought in across the border. That approach would ensure that the aid reaches civilians affected by the crisis in Syria and does not fall into the hands of armed terrorist groups. On 12 January 2016, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Stephen O'Brien, requested permission for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to cooperate with the United Nations in delivering cross-border assistance provided by the United Nations. The Syrian Government approved that request and agreed that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent should receive and distribute the cross-border assistance.

18. Lastly, the Syrian Government deplores the Secretariat's persistent failure to condemn terrorism as the cause of the Syrian crisis, its humanitarian repercussions and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Indeed, the Secretariat has blamed that deterioration on the actions that the Syrian Government and its allies have taken in order to eradicate the armed terrorist groups, which are supported by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Syrian Government repeats that if the Secretariat persists in that approach, it will only prolong the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

19. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to prevail on those States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to refrain from doing so, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and terrorist financing, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

20. I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the identical letters dated 23 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups ignored by the authors of the report

In the period 21 December 2015 to 21 January 2016, terrorists killed 164 civilians, including 49 children, and injured 312 civilians, including 66 children, across the governorates of Syria, not including Raqqah, Idlib and Dayr al-Zawr.

On 5 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front fired mortar shells at Izra' city in Dar'a governorate, killing one girl. Another girl sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.

On 6 and 7 January, armed terrorist groups fired mortar shells at Baghdad Street and Thawrah Street in Damascus, killing 9 civilians and injuring 38 others. Material damage was caused.

On 6 and 7 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bani Zayd neighbourhood of Aleppo city fired gas cylinder missiles at the Suryan al-Jadidah neighbourhood. One woman was killed, six civilians were injured and material damage was caused.

On 11 and 12 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bani Zayd neighbourhood of Aleppo city fired gas cylinder missiles at the Ashrafiyah al-Jadidah neighbourhood. Three children were killed, two civilians were injured and material damage was caused.

On 12 and 13 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization fired rocket-propelled grenades at the towns of Nubul and Zahra', killing one civilian and causing material damage.

On 12 and 13 January, a landmine exploded in the village of Dawudiyah in Hasakah, killing two children and injuring 10 civilians.

On 12 and 13 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front fired mortar shells at the Manshiyah neighbourhood in Dar'a al-Balad, killing one civilian and injuring another.

On 13 and 14 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bani Zayd neighbourhood of Aleppo city fired gas cylinder missiles at the Ashrafiyah neighbourhood. One child was killed, two others were injured and material damage was caused.

On 16 and 17 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bustan al-Qasr and Old City neighbourhoods of Aleppo fired gas canisters at the Bustan al-Zahrah and Aziziyah neighbourhoods. Three civilians were killed, 21 civilians were injured and material damage was caused.

On 17 and 18 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL located in the village of Subayhiyah in Aleppo city fired rocket-propelled grenades at Safirah town, killing two civilians and injuring another. Material damage was caused.

On 17 and 18 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL located in Dayr al-Zawr fired at the village of Baghiliyah, killing one civilian.

On 19 and 20 January, the groups fired mortar shells at Masakin al-Ruwwad, killing one civilian and injuring one child.

On 18 and 19 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Amiriyah neighbourhood of Aleppo city fired gas cylinder missiles at the Salah al-Din neighbourhood. Three civilians were killed, 14 others were injured and material damage was caused.

On 27 and 28 January, the groups fired mortar shells and gas cylinder missiles at the Aziziyah, Jamiliyah, Talal and Binyamin neighbourhoods, killing or injuring eight civilians.

On 19 and 20 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL located in the Tall Fa'uri neighbourhood fired rocket-propelled grenades at Safirah town, killing four civilians, injuring five others and causing material damage.

On 23 and 24 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front and the Rahman Corps located in Duma gardens in Rif Dimashq fired mortar shells at the Assad suburb in Harasta and the Wafidin camp. Three civilians were killed, nine civilians were injured and material damage was caused.

On 23 and 24 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL located in Dayr al-Zawr fired mortar shells at the city. The shells landed near the city hall building. Two women sustained shrapnel wounds. Those groups also fired mortar shells at the Qusur neighbourhood, inflicting shrapnel wounds on one civilian and one child.

On 24 and 25 January, in downtown Qamishli in Hasakah governorate, an explosive device planted on a bicycle parked on Miami Street was detonated, killing three civilians and injuring 14 others.

On 25 and 26 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL fired mortar shells at the Qusur neighbourhood in Hasakah city, killing four civilians and injuring six others. Material damage was caused. Those groups also fired two mortar shells at Thawrah neighbourhood, killing one woman and injuring six civilians.

On 27 and 28 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to ISIL fired a mortar shell at the Tahtuh neighbourhood, killing one civilian.

On 26 January, the terrorist organization ISIL perpetrated two suicide bombings in the Zahra' neighbourhood of Homs city, killing 24 civilians and injuring 100 others. Significant material damage was caused.

On 27 and 28 January, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in Aleppo city fired mortar shells and gas cylinder missiles at the Aziziyah, Jamiliyah, Talal and Binyamin neighbourhoods, killing or injuring eight civilians.

On 28 and 29 January, armed terrorist groups located in Salah al-Din and Bustan al-Qasr neighbourhoods fired mortar shells and gas cylinder missiles at the Idha'ah and Jamiliyah neighbourhoods, injuring seven civilians. An exploding gas cylinder landed on the deaf-mute institute building, which is used as a prison. One woman died and civilians, including a child, were injured.

On 21 February, the terrorist organization ISIL detonated a Toyota vehicle using a large quantity of explosive materials. The vehicle was detonated in a densely populated popular market in Sayyidah Zaynab city in Rif Dimashq governorate. Two other blasts followed; the first involved a gas bottle, and the second was set off by a suicide bomber who detonated an explosive belt in the midst of civilians who had gathered to come to the aid of those injured in the first blast. The three terrorist blasts killed over 85 civilians and injured hundreds more, most of them children, women and elderly people. Serious material damage was caused to property and infrastructure.

On 21 February, the terrorist organization ISIL detonated two car bombs in quick succession in the Zahra' neighbourhood of Homs city. More than 47 people were killed and over 110 others were injured, most of them in critical condition. Significant material damage was caused to property and infrastructure.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 23 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered during January 2016 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Also listed is assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Aleppo, Qunaytirah, Hasakah, Homs, Hama and Dar'a, but not to Raqqah or Dayr al-Zawr governorates. Some 1,672,655 Syrian beneficiaries (334,531 families) received food parcels provided by WFP through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Some 588,795 beneficiaries (117,759 families) received food parcels provided by the United Nations through non-governmental organizations. The total number of the beneficiaries of United Nations assistance distributed from inside Syrian territory thus stands at 2,261,450 (452,290 families). The above-mentioned assistance was distributed to the governorates as follows: 59,250 parcels in Rif Dimashq; 16,952 parcels in Dar'a and its countryside; 4,000 parcels in Idlib; 52,000 parcels in Aleppo and its countryside; 19,909 parcels in Hasakah; 26,778 parcels in Hama and its countryside; and 65,776 parcels in Homs and its countryside.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross from inside Syrian territory to most governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Qunaytirah, Aleppo, Hama, Homs. A total of 78,280 food parcels were delivered, in addition to 41,425 canned food parcels and food aid for community kitchens. A total of 3,302 food parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were distributed in Homs, Damascus and Aleppo governorates.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid, medical assistance and water purifiers) provided by United Nations organizations and foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in Aleppo, Hasakah, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Suwayda', Tartus and Ladhiqiyah governorates.

The Syrian Government renewed its approval for WFP to bring humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybin crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, in order to allow 55,000 food rations and 12 tons of peanut butter to be brought into Hasakah governorate and distributed to beneficiaries in January 2016.

United Nations A/70/756–S/2016/175

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
24 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith the appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the parliaments of foreign States, international organizations and parliamentary assemblies condemning the continuing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which was adopted on 18 February 2016 (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-02919 (E) 290216

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the parliaments of foreign States, international organizations and parliamentary assemblies condemning the continuing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine

Underscoring the respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965, the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of 1975, the Strasbourg Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995 and General Assembly resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014 entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine",

Noting that respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, maintenance of international peace and security and development of friendly and equal relations between States are the foundation of international relations and international law,

Stressing that respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and protection of the rights of its citizens is a fundamental responsibility of every State, and that abuse of those principles is unacceptable and must be unanimously condemned by the international community,

Strongly condemning the continuing military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began on 20 February 2014 in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol with the forcible seizure of Ukrainian territory by divisions of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, the organization and holding of the illegal "referendum", and the artificial creation of illegal local State authorities controlled by the Kremlin,

Stressing the fact that Ukraine respects international law and respects human rights and freedoms,

Expressing serious concern over the systematic, deliberate and massive violations committed by the Russian occupation authorities against human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rights of indigenous peoples in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions,

Condemning the political and nationally motivated persecution and harassment of the civil, political, social and economic rights of citizens of Ukraine in the temporarily occupied territories,

Emphasizing the unacceptability of the abrogation of property, linguistic, religious and other rights of national minorities and indigenous peoples of Ukraine, in particular the Crimean Tatars,

Condemning the occupation policy of the Russian authorities with respect to the illegal confiscation of Ukraine's State property and the private property of citizens of Ukraine who reside in the temporarily occupied territories,

Stressing the criminal and non-humane actions of the Russian occupation Government that implements a policy of total terror against dissidents and ethnic and religious communities, both in Russia and in the occupied territories of Ukraine,

Being aware of the threat of the increasing authoritarianism and dictatorship within the Russian Federation, the danger of the greater development of a policy of aggression and terror by that country against the Ukrainian State and its people, and against peace and security in the region and in the world,

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Demands that the Russian Federation immediately cease the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and also of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions;

Calls on the Russian Federation to cease the continuing practice of abductions, illegal arrests and imprisonment of citizens of Ukraine, to terminate the ban on the entry of representatives of the Crimean Tatar people into the Crimean peninsula and to cease violations of freedom of speech and media and restrictions on freedom of religion and peaceful assembly;

Calls on the Russian Federation to cease actions that directly or indirectly finance illegal armed groups in its territory and in the territory of Ukraine, sending military equipment and weapons, organizing logistics, training and financing of terrorists, and to fully implement the requirements of General Assembly resolution 68/262 entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", the terms of the Minsk agreements and the Package of Measures for their implementation of 12 February 2015;

Appeals to the international community to condemn the violent actions of the Russian Federation against the territory of Ukraine and to exert greater political and diplomatic pressure on the Russian occupation authorities to restore the jurisdiction of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders;

Calls on the Russian Federation to immediately release political prisoners and the residents of Crimea, and to implement the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights to ensure and facilitate the unrestricted access of international missions and international human rights organizations to the territory of the Crimean Peninsula for the purpose of continuous monitoring and surveillance of the area in order to ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms on the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

Calls on the international community to continue to exert pressure on the Russian Federation as a country that blatantly violates the Charter of the United Nations, the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum) of 5 December 1994, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of 1 August 1975 and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 1999, until Russia complies with the international legal framework;

Welcomes the European Parliament resolution, adopted on 4 February 2016, which strongly condemns the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, and points to the unprecedented critical situation of human rights in the peninsula, the systematic attacks by the Russian occupation authorities on the fundamental rights and freedoms of all who disagree with its policies, primarily Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians, including the suppression of any manifestations of democracy and freedom in the Crimea, including the termination of functioning free media;

Supports the position of the European Parliament on the necessity of launching an international negotiation mechanism to restore Ukrainian sovereignty by the de-occupation of the Autonomic Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in the "Geneva Plus" format, with the direct involvement of the institutions of the European Union in the process.

United Nations A/70/757–S/2016/176

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
24 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the second anniversary of the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-02924 (E) 260216

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the second anniversary of the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation

20 February 2016

Two years ago, the Russian Federation, by committing an armed aggression against Ukraine, began the process of rewriting post-war history and violated the norms of international law, which are the basis of peaceful coexistence. Russia ceased to be a part of the civilized world and has become a pariah State.

Russian military personnel in green uniforms without any insignia became a symbol of a hybrid war, and their arrival in the Ukrainian Crimea started the Kremlin's blatant flouting of international law and violation of human rights in the occupied peninsula. Under the Russian occupation, Crimea has become a "grey zone" where injustice, terror, intimidation, kidnapping and torture prevail. Occupation authorities commit systematic and large-scale violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, wage a hidden war against dissidents and destroy the signs of the linguistic, religious and cultural identity of Ukrainians and the indigenous people of Crimea: Crimean Tatars. The actions of the Russian authorities aimed at banning Majlis activity, as well as political processes against Crimean Tatars in the occupied peninsula, clearly prove the tyranny of the occupants.

The international community has unanimously expressed its solidarity with Ukraine in its fight against Russian armed aggression. Democratic nations condemned the occupation and imposed sanctions against Russia and its leadership in order to restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Ukraine demands that the Russian Federation stop the occupation, repression and numerous provocations against Ukrainian citizens and pro-Ukrainian people of the Crimean peninsula.

We call on the international community to increase political and diplomatic pressure on Russia, as the occupying State, and to support Ukraine's initiative of establishing an international platform to discuss the issues that are vitally important to the people of the occupied peninsula and the entire international community.

United Nations A/70/758–S/2016/177

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
24 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the Appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the Parliaments of Foreign States, International Parliamentary Assemblies and Organizations in connection with the threats to the lives of hostages held by the Russian militants in the territory of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, adopted on 18 February 2016 (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-02929 (E) 290216

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the Parliaments of Foreign States, International Parliamentary Assemblies and Organizations in connection with the threats to the lives of hostages held by the Russian militants in the territory of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions

The comprehensive, unconditional and full implementation of the provisions of the Minsk agreements and the package of measures for their implementation, of 12 February 2015, is a key element of the political and diplomatic settlement of the situation in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions caused by the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

At the same time, provisions that relate to the life, freedom and security of people are determinants of the successful and peaceful resolution of the situation and should be a priority.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine notes that contrary to the spirit and language of the Minsk agreements, the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it commands have taken no actions to implement the humanitarian provisions of the Minsk agreements, in particular those relating to the release of hostages seized by them and the unimpeded access to humanitarian missions in the occupied territories.

The constant acts of violent harassment and intimidation perpetrated by the Russian occupation forces and its militants in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions have become particularly brutal in nature against the hostages seized from among local residents, journalists, volunteers and representatives of the armed forces of Ukraine and other law enforcement agencies. As at 22 February, according to the Joint Center for Control and Coordination of the search and release of illegally imprisoned individuals, hostages and establishing the location of the missing in the area of the Anti-Terrorist Operation, 137 citizens of Ukraine are being held hostage in inhumane conditions, and the fate of 694 citizens of Ukraine remains unknown.

The militants' recently voiced threats regarding their readiness to impose the death penalty against their hostages are particularly alarming.

Consequently, out of concern and feeling responsible for the safety and lives of the citizens of Ukraine who are held hostage by the country-aggressor and the forces it controls, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine calls on the parliaments of foreign states, international parliamentary assemblies and organizations:

- To use all available mechanisms at the governmental, parliamentary and non-governmental levels to give a clear signal to the Russian Federation on the unacceptability of the use of assassinations and extrajudicial executions, torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment against the hostages and local residents of the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions occupied by Russia;

- To demand that the Russian Federation provide immediate access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the hostages and illegally detained persons and to seek the involvement of ICRC to search for missing persons and identify the bodies of those who have been killed;
- To urge the Russian Federation to implement the transfer of citizens of Ukraine who are being illegally held by Russia and the militants it controls;
- To demand that the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it supports cease the ongoing military aggression against Ukraine and immediately fulfil its obligations under the Minsk agreements regarding Ukraine regaining control of its borders;
- To urge the Governments of their countries to continue and strengthen the restrictive measures against the Russian Federation, to ensure the complete fulfilment of its obligations under the Minsk agreements.